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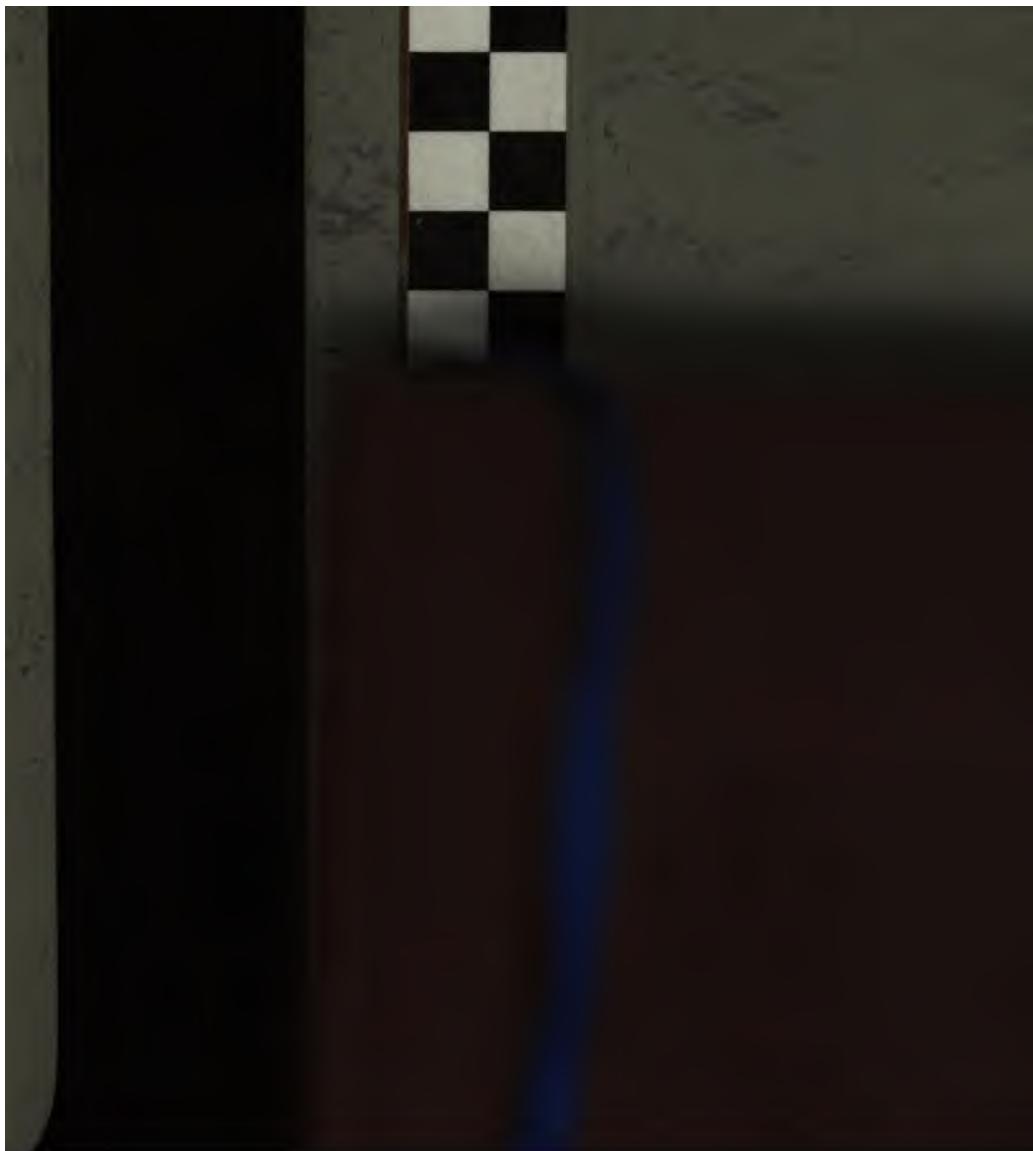
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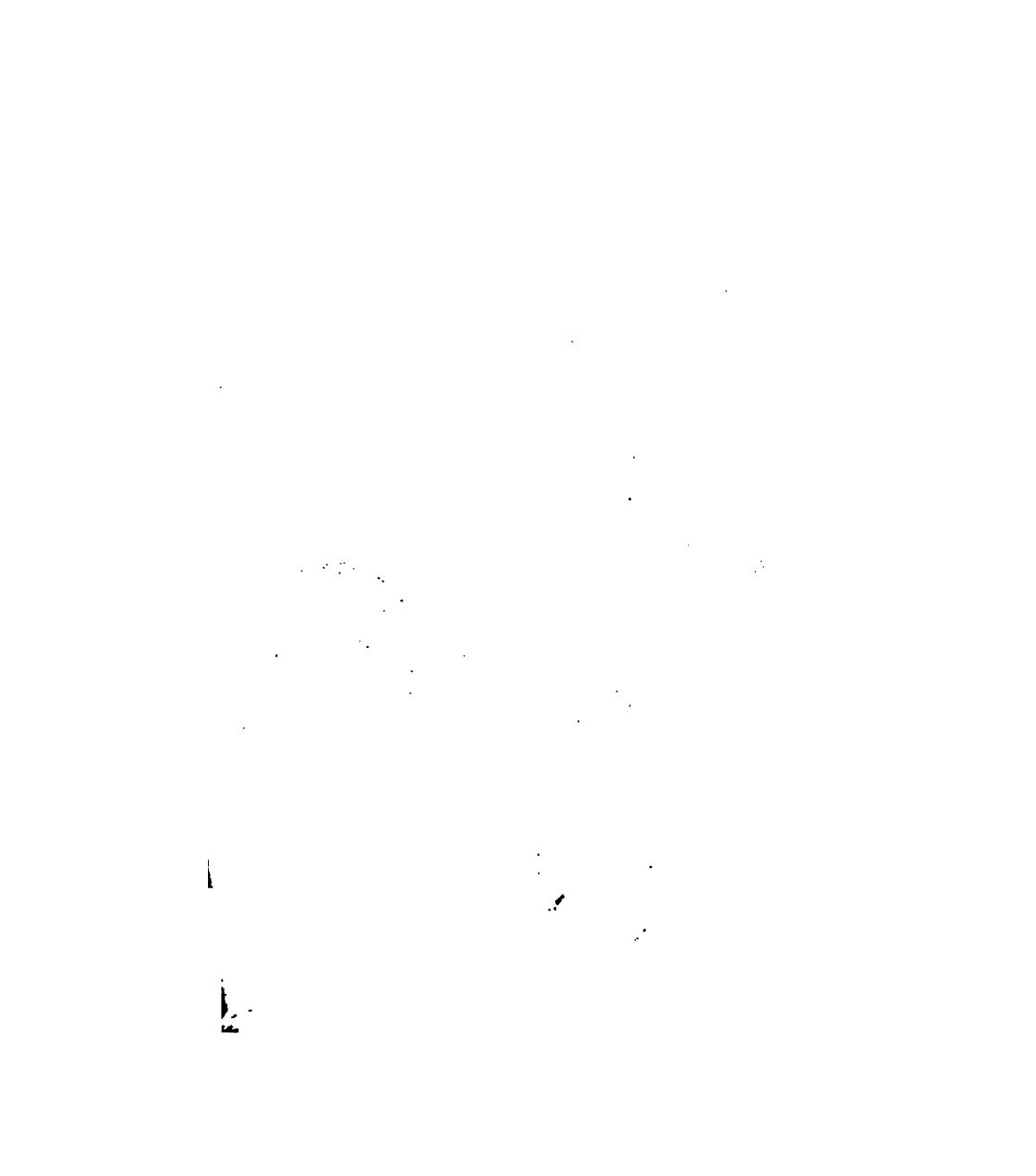
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Bethany Thoughts and Musings

OF

A DEPARTED FRIEND.

EDITED BY THE

REV. THOMAS HUTCHINSON, M.A.,
VICAR OF DITCHLING.

“TIS HARD WHEN BY AFFECTION LED
TO SPEAK OF THE LONG-CHERISHED DEAD;
LEST haply they should linger near,
AND HUMAN PRAISE SHOULD PAIN THE EAR
OF THEM, WHO CHRIST'S OWN FACE BEHOLD,
OR HIDE THEM 'NEATH HIS GARMENT'S FOLD.”
THE BAPTISTERY.



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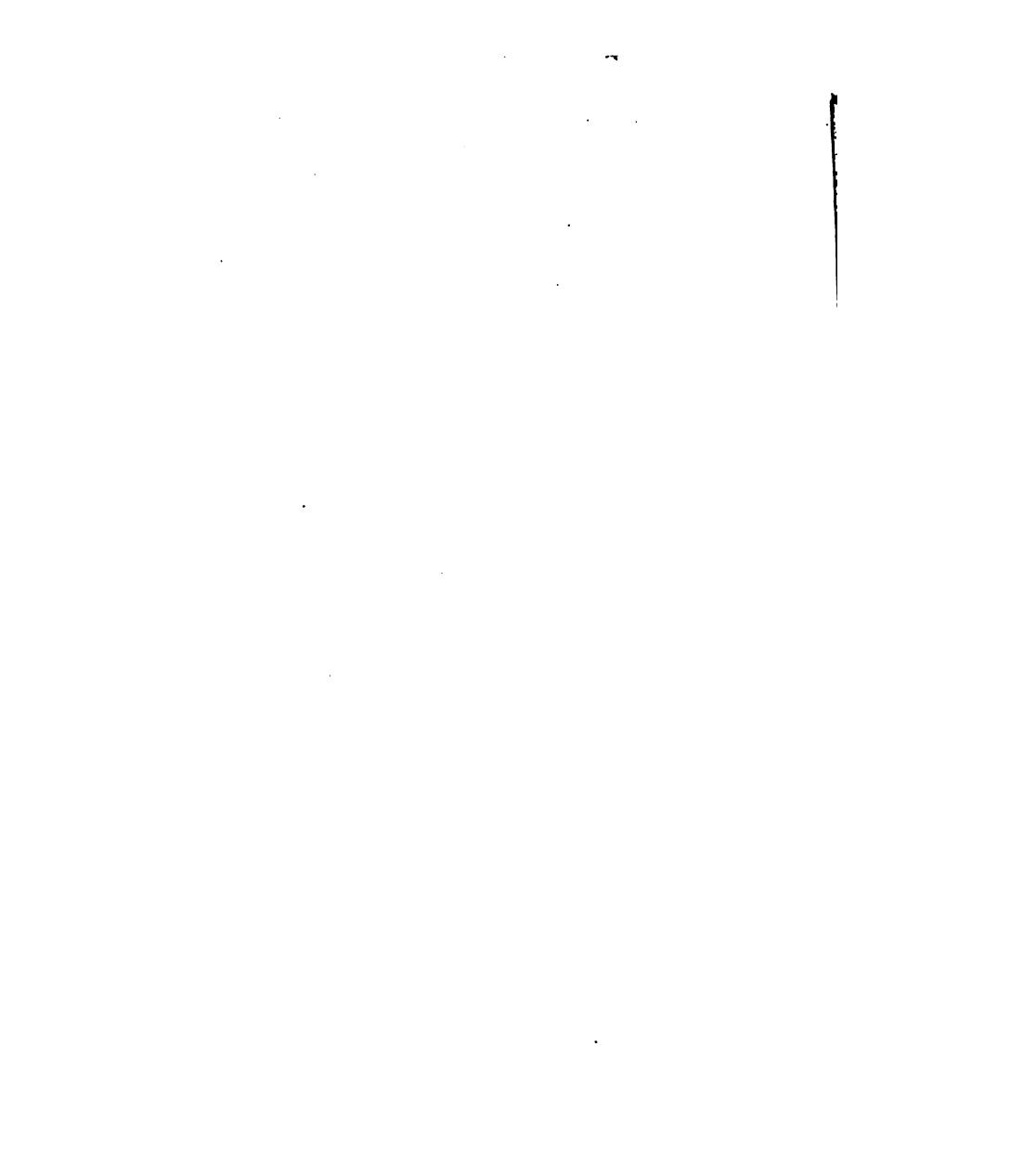
MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,

I am very thankful that in your usual kindness you permit this little book to go forth under the shadow of your name.

The thoughts and musings herein expressed are a faithful portraiture of one, whose earnest mind was ever employed in working for her Divine Master, although her appointed portion was frequently to bear the discipline of weariness and patient suffering, which through God's chastening love and mercy ended in "perfect peace."

I beg to subscribe myself,
Your Lordship's very faithful servant,
THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

DITCHLING VICARAGE,
Conversion of S. Paul, 1866.



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HOLY THOUGHTS AND MUSINGS OF A DEPARTED FRIEND.

Shadows ; or, the Sun-dial and the

ERRATUM.

P. 10, line 20, *for Xavier* *read Azals.*

shadow has advanced up to the very highest point ; might it not be well to remember and lay to heart that *thus* it is day by day with that blank page of our brief life on earth, which each morning lays before us when we wake, waiting till we fill it hour by hour, or rather moment by moment, with the record of the thoughts, and words, and acts, the passions and the feelings of another day of our lives ? Surely



HOLY THOUGHTS AND MUSINGS OF A DEPARTED FRIEND.

Shadows; or, the Sun-dial and the Mountain.

WHEN we look on a sun-dial, and mark the shadow stealing imperceptibly yet surely over it, or as we note the different aspect of some glorious snowy peak or craggy mountaint at the various hours of the day, from the moment when the first rays of the yet unrisen sun begin to gild their summits, till that when the evening shadow has advanced up to the very highest point; might it not be well to remember and lay to heart that *thus* it is day by day with that blank page of our brief life on earth, which each morning lays before us when we wake, waiting till we fill it hour by hour, or rather moment by moment, with the record of the thoughts, and words, and acts, the passions and the feelings of another day of our lives? Surely

this is a touching and a solemn thought, and we may well shrink from the task of filling that fair and stainless page, lest we should fill it amiss, and then it can be erased no more to be filled again, and more worthily than before. Even so is it with a child when a new book has been given him to write in, and he shrinks from writing aught, because, perchance, when he has done so, he shall feel that it might have been much better done. There is this difference, however, that the page of our life *must* be filled, that even whilst we are thinking about it, it *is* filling, as the shadow *must* steal over the face of the dial, or the sunlight advance or recede from the snowy mountain peak. And this is repeated in as many cases as there are individuals on earth: and, oh, how variously is the daily page of life filled by each, *even* amongst those who call themselves God's children and servants!

Singing of Birds in early Spring-time.

WHAT is in this sound which gives joy to our heart in a way which I need not labour to express in words? for there is not I suppose a heart on earth so hard and dead to all the

gentle influences of nature, as to be insensible to the power of this familiar sound, though few of us perchance may have very exactly analyzed the feeling it induces in our souls. No doubt this is a mixed one, and must vary with individuals; perhaps with some, it is connected very much with early associations, while in the case of others it kindles the imagination, calling up visions of delight, connected with approaching seasons of spring and summer-tide. To my mind, the special character of it seems to be a kind of relenting of something, erst hard, ungenial, and pitiless. It is so indeed literally as regards the season at this time of year, but there is I think a felt analogy between this yielding of frost and ice to gushing streams and the genial air of spring, and other kinds of relenting, say, that of the long impenitent and blinded heart, which could not see or own its error, or that of the hard and unforgiving spirit, which had dwelt so long on the thought of injuries received as to forget the price at which he must needs himself procure forgiveness at the Hands of God; or of the niggardly and ungenerous, who have not yet learned that "to give is more blessed than to receive,"¹ and that treasure spent is so much laid up for them in the treasury of Heaven;

¹ Acts xx. 35.

or of the selfish and calculating, who look at the greatness of some sacrifice required of them, and forget that we are all called to love as God has loved, and to tread in the steps of Him who even laid down His life for His brethren ; or of the desponding and the unbelieving Christians, who have not dared to believe themselves forgiven ; or of the over-diffident, who have not yet learned to appropriate the blessed promises of God, contained in Holy Writ. To these and such as these, will not the voice of early birds perchance convey a soothing sense of something lost and found, or of some newly acquired treasure, of something to clasp to their hearts and hold there with the tenacious grasp of those who dread again to lose what they have scarce recovered, or of which they have hardly gained possession ? Is it not like the first removal of some great anxiety, or the first gleam of hope of the return to health of some beloved object ? Will not soft tears steal into the eyes of some who never wept before, or who have only known the bitter tears which were *not* God's gift, as is the relief of a righteous grief ? Will not a new warmth be felt at the heart by others, as if that of a fire, before which all that is hard within them must be melted, all that is cold or dreary will be kindled or enlightened ?

Is not all this too much to look for from so simple and common a thing as the note of a poor little bird, who sings because it is his instinct to do so, or because his sinless heart is glad, and with a view to cheer his mate, without a thought of man and his woes, the penalty of sin? But why should we think lightly of the power of so small an instrument to work for the weal of man, since that instrument though small, is in the hands of the Almighty? He works by what means He wills, and is glorified by the apparent incapacity of the means He uses.

“Give us this day our daily Bread.”

How little we think when we use these words daily, of the necessity of using them literally, and not merely in a general manner as expressing our need of the supply of all we require for the body! Yet how much reason there is that we should really ask for the daily supply of that most indispensable of God's common blessings, daily bread. How much more important is this to our comfort and well-being than we are apt to remember, while we receive and enjoy it carelessly and as a matter of course.

This was brought forcibly before the mind of a sick person, who when really suffering from the inability to procure any bread which was wholesome and suited to her state, suddenly remembered how little reality there was in her daily and oft-repeated supplication for daily bread, and saw how much need there was to apply to God for that and every good gift as well for the body as the soul. It is a remarkable occurrence that *that* very day, a supply of excellent bread was sent by the same baker who had previously so signally failed, and this favourable change continued. Was this a speedy answer granted to real humble prayer and acknowledgement of man's need, and God's power? Why not? We are so expressly bidden to ask that we may receive; yet how many things do we go on lacking for ourselves and others because we will not trust this promise and act upon it with regard to little things as well as great. We "lack wisdom," guidance, and direction, and find it not because we seek it not from Him "that giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not;"¹ yet what encouragement is contained in those words. We know what it is to meet rebuffs from men, when we look to them for counsel or instruction; either they are busy, or they are weary, or else they are

¹ S. James i. 5.

indifferent, or perhaps they are not aware of the greatness of our need and desire for sympathy and help at their hands. But our Heavenly Guide and Teacher is never weary, or unmindful, or cold, or indifferent. He knows the thoughts which trouble us even better than we do ourselves, and is ever at leisure to lend the ear to each one of His weak and ignorant disciples. Why then do we not seek Him in every difficulty, waiting patiently for an answer which will be given us in some manner; if not at once, yet in His own good time. Either we doubt His promise, or we are unwilling to wait His time. But what do we not lose through this want of Faith and Patience!

“Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”¹

How unpleasing we have thought this similitude when applied to Himself by our blessed LORD. How surprised, if not offended, we have been at His using such a one! But did we not deserve the reproof He once addressed to some of His disciples, “Oh! fools and slow of heart?”² &c. What are we that we should

¹ S. Matth. xxiv. 28.

² S. Luke xxiv. 25.

presume to question the fitness of any form of speech He chose to use? But we should have been saved from much perplexity and from all irreverent cavilling at these words of our Divine SAVIOUR, had we searched more carefully into their significance, and the reason of their being employed by Him. Holy men have done this for us, and tell us that we are likened to eagles flying to their prey, because with the same avidity we should hasten to feed on Him Who has given us His most precious Body and Blood, for the sustenance and life of our souls. Thus this simple allusion to the blessed Sacrament removes at once all that was inexplicable or repulsive in the comparison, and invests it with a most holy and touching interest in the eyes of all devout and thankful communicants. And surely the eagle, with its strong flight, its high aim, and its piercing eye, is not an ignoble similitude to which to liken man. Let us remember that the point of the comparison lies not as much in this bird's seeking its appointed food, but the manner in which he does so; the wonderful instinct which brings him through all difficulties and from any distance to his prey, wherever it may be, and not alone merely, but with flocks of his own species. Oh! that we did indeed resemble this irrational creature in our search for Him, to Whose Sacramental

Presence, not a natural instinct but a heaven-implanted desire calls and attracts us. Thus have some loving and ardent souls sought Him in all ages. Thus do some seek Him even now in these latter days, when faith and love have waxed faint and cold. There are yet the seven thousand in Israel, known only to God, unknown to the world and mostly to one another, who place their chief delight in the mysterious but all-satisfying Presence of their **Lord** and **Saviour** in His blessed Sacrament. Oh! let us emulate their faith and love.

On Desire of Holy Communion.

How frequently we remark that to devout persons and those who earnestly desire to receive often the Holy Communion, this privilege is denied by reason of ill-health or some other insuperable impediment, such as exists not in the case of others who have not the same fervour or desire for spiritual privileges. This is at first sight and to inexperienced minds a great perplexity, and well-nigh a cause of offence. There is an appearance almost of hardness in the manner with which the former are dealt with; it does not accord with the

common view that the desire should be proportionate to the enjoyment. But it is a matter of such frequent observation as to arrest our attention and lead us to seek for some explanation of the difficulty. Well, at first sight an analogy meets our eyes, between this manner of God's dealing with the souls of men, and that in which we often find He deals with their bodies. How many have wealth enough to procure all that they can possibly need or desire for their sustenance, but lack the appetite and power to enjoy their food, while to others, such as the poor who have scarce the means of satisfying their wants, the *power* to enjoy is given freely.

But analogies, though valuable as a help to the solving of hard questions, are not sufficient as an explanation of them. A better one is furnished by the theory of a devout writer, Xavier, who says that all God's dealings with man, are based on the principle of "Equilibre et compensation;" so that hereby is perfect justice insured and exercised towards all men. Thus none must have *all* the good gifts, whether of nature or of grace. Therefore to one is given in a larger measure appetite; to another that wherewith to satisfy it. And as the desire for spiritual things is *in* itself and by itself a great good, it ought not to be lightly esteemed

if possessed, although its possession does involve at times a sense of privation by the denial of the means of gratifying it. Better to desire and not have, than to have without the desire.

On the Anniversary Day of Baptism.

How strangely these days are treated by the baptized. Either they are passed by unheeded or unknown, because it does not happen to be the custom to keep them as we do the day of our birth into the world, or else if they are observed by the more earnest-minded and devout, it is with an uncomfortable feeling more akin to pain than joy, such joy as becomes Christians, in the commemoration of the exalted privileges then conferred upon them of being made "members of CHRIST, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." And why is this? Let us look the matter honestly in the face, and we shall easily perceive that it is because conscience upbraids us with the sense of much ingratitude for blessings vouchsafed and neglect of privileges conferred. But should it be so? Is there not (as is usual with us) too much of self in this? Let us rather on such days as these, strive to

emerge from the mists of self-contemplation, and gaze steadily on the Sun of Righteousness, Who, as the bright and Morning Star, gave Himself to us on this auspicious day of our Baptism, or rather took us to Himself that we might be parted no more for eternity, unless it be by our own desperate wilfulness and neglect.

Let us examine one by one admiringly and gratefully the surpassingly precious and truly royal gifts which were on this day given to each of us, to be members of the mystical body, the Church, children of a FATHER in heaven, and heirs, for “if children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”¹ To some of us it is shown what great things we must suffer for His sake; but will these combatants be found to complain when the heat of the strife is over, and they can at the close of the day of battle, review the fight they have fought, and see the advantages they have gained over the enemy? Will they not rather be found ready to say with the royal Psalmist, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted;”² or with a well-known Christian bard,

“ ‘Tis justly done,
Only in glory, LORD, Thy sinful servant own.”

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

² Ps. cix. 71.

And what are some of the fruits of their toil and sweat, and of the very shedding of their blood in the service of their King? For one thing, they have learnt to know their brethren and themselves, the weakness of their common nature, its need of sympathy and tender indulgence; they have acquired the power of sympathising with others, so that henceforth all weak and wounded spirits will be attracted towards them as by a kind of spiritual magnet, and they will be permitted to minister to their Lord in His afflicted members in a way which those can never do who have lived in peace from baptism to the grave. And is this a slight reward, a trivial gain, so that we should grudge to have been signed at our baptism "with the sign of the Cross, in token that henceforth we should fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end?"¹

The Lord's Prayer.

THERE is some danger of thinking too much of ourselves in using this Divine prayer, and too little of Him Who has given it to us, through

¹ Baptismal Service.

His dear Son, and this even with a very good intention, and in accordance with the practical interpretation put upon it by holy men of old. While we pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," &c., thinking meanwhile only of these things being done by and in us, in our souls; is there not too much of man, too much of self, too little of God and His sole glory? Would it not be a more correct view of this blessed prayer to take the first part and the latter part separately, dedicating the first three petitions entirely to the honour of God, and the advancement of His glory; then coming down to the thought of ourselves and our wants, (oh, what an infinite descent;) and praying in lowly voice, "Give us this day our daily bread; Forgive us our trespasses, &c.; Lead us not into temptation." Perhaps there is nothing new in this remark, but it struck me newly from having used the prayer myself faultily, and this I think partly from an impression left on my mind by S. Augustine's explanation of the first petitions. Not but that we must desire and pray for the setting up of God's spiritual kingdom in us, but then *that* is necessarily included in the prayer for His glory and His rule, and there is no need to dwell on the means while we pray for the end, and thus to

centre our thoughts too much on self, and on our own part in aiding towards the advancement of that end.

On Prayer.

THE intercourse which the disciples of our Blessed LORD were permitted to hold with Him when He was on earth, and that which it is our privilege now to maintain with Him by prayer, we are apt to look upon as two things, wholly distinct in their nature. But why so? Do we not thereby risk the not duly recognising and dwelling on the thought of His Divinity on the one hand and His gracious humanity on the other? When we see His disciples holding familiar converse with Him, we scarcely realize that it was no less than the SON of GOD they thus fearlessly approached, and that their petition was a prayer. When we kneel and pray to Him unseen, we too feebly realize the thought that He is still the mild SON of MAN, full of sympathy and gentle condescension as when on earth, (for is He not the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?)¹ Thus our prayers fall short of that reality which is the very

¹ Heb. xiii. 8.

essence of true prayer, in which the soul sees by faith the holy and adorable Being Whom she desires to approach and to address in singleness of heart; knowing that she has been heard, she can contentedly leave the issue of her prayer to Him Who alone “knows, and cares, and wills what is truly good for us,” and for all them for whom we desire to pray. It has been well said by a holy man, that we ought to put more importance in our prayers than we are wont to do, and not to be unbelieving as to the efficacy of them. Might we not add that we ought to remember our prayers more than we do, or if we cannot always do this, at least to bear in mind that there is One Who remembers them all, even He to Whom they were made, and Who noted them, whether the petitions were such as were acceptable to Him or not? Yes; it is a startling fact, though not the less true, that God can no more forget the prayers which have gone out of the lips of His creatures than He can avoid seeing all their actions, since His Spirit fills the world, and He which containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice; and if all our words reach His ear, how should those which are actually addressed to Him escape doing so? This is a solemn thought, but one full of comfort also, for we are very apt to imagine, because we see not at

once the fulfilment of our prayers, and especially of our intercessory prayer for others, that the words in which they were embodied have fallen to the ground unnoted, unremembered as it were by Him to Whom they were addressed. But not so: it is by us that they have been forgotten. He well knows all that we have asked, and do not our own consciences bear witness to the truth of this, warning us that if in a moment of passion or exasperated feeling we may have uttered an uncharitable wish, or made an unwise petition, this will be remembered to our hurt hereafter, unless it be timely repented of, even though it may wholly escape our memories until the Day of Judgment bring it again before our eyes. And if it be so as regards evil or hasty petitions uttered in the ears of the Omniscient, will it be otherwise concerning those fervent, oft-repeated and deliberate prayers and intercessions on behalf of those we love, or uttered with some good and holy purpose in view, because we almost forget what was the precise tenor of our supplication, and what were the very words we used when we poured out our hearts before God, and sought to call down His richest blessing on some loved head, or to win His gracious approbation on some much-cherished project? Away with such chilling

unbelief, the root and source of all discouragement, the bane of prayer, the antidote to Faith, and Hope, and Love.

“Come unto Me, all that are weary.”

How very welcome is this call to those who do feel weary, who are not in sorrow (we will say) not even in heaviness of spirit, but who, whether from weakness of body or of mind or both, are weary and feel the burden of life, and its excitements, joys, anxieties, uncertainties—events too much for them, as was the prophet’s journey through the wilderness to Horeb. Sweet indeed to such is the sound of this loving call to come and find rest, or rather renewed strength for the way, and to know there is a strength greater, infinitely greater than our own, which we may make ours if we will. “Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life,”¹ was said to some by our Blessed LORD in the accents of sorrowful reproach; but if we desire this life He is ready and willing that we should have it, and that we should have it “more abundantly.” For, alas, it is too true of many of us, that we are, (as the poet so

¹ S. John v. 40.

touchingly says,) "tired ere the fight began," and greatly in need of angelic, and more than angelic help, that we may fight our fight, and keep our way.

How much more welcome still is this call, or at least how much more needed is the rest offered, when the soul of any is not only weary, but "heavy laden," whether it be with the weight of some actual sorrow, or with that almost more dreary and hopeless burden of a great anxiety, and previsions of coming trouble; truly a burden which weighs heavier than any other, because we have only our own strength wherewith to bear it, no support having ever (I believe) been pledged to us by God under any but real, actual, and pressing trials and sorrows: those which we make for ourselves by anxiously looking on into the yet hidden future, are not sanctified; they draw us not nearer to God, rather they separate us from Him, hiding His Face when we would seek it by prayer, putting a barrier between Him and us which hides His cheering light, and leaves us in utter darkness and gloom. If we would be delivered from this miserable condition, let us hasten to prepare ourselves for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. The very act of preparation will profit us, and half work our cure; for how dare we retain

murmuring distrustful thoughts in a heart which we are about to invite Him to make His abode? And if the drawing nearer to Him be so effectual, what will not the actual receiving Him into our hearts do for us, as a sovereign cure for weakness and sickness of heart or a heavy laden spirit? May we not indeed "return to our house clothed and in our right mind," "seeing" rather than blind as we were, "walking erect" instead of halting and stooping as we went, with the tears wiped from our faces, and if not singing with gladness of heart, yet at least cheered by the inward breathings of hope and trust, ready to say with the Psalmist, "Nevertheless, though I am sometime afraid, yet put I my trust in Thee. I will praise God because of His Word. I have put my trust in God, and will not fear. Thou tellest my flittings: put my tears into Thy bottle: are not these things noted in Thy book? In God's Word will I rejoice: in the Lord's Word will I comfort me. Unto Thee, O God, I pay my vows: unto Thee will I give thanks. Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt Thou not deliver my feet from falling?"¹

¹ Ps. lvi. 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, Prayer Book Version.

S. John vit.

IN the Second Lesson for to-day¹ we read how our Blessed LORD answered the thoughts of the people at Jerusalem, when they were full of perplexity and questionings concerning Himself. And thus do we also find the inward thoughts and cogitations of our hearts answered by some words which we hear in a sermon, proving that the LORD is ever with His ministers, and wills to reveal to us through them His perfect knowledge of what is in every man. Speaking to us also by the lips of His Priests He wills to reprove, to comfort, and to instruct us, even as when on earth He vouchsafed Himself with His own blessed Lips to instruct the sons of men. And yet how true it is, (though to see it stated in black and white might startle some,) that we can hear a very good sermon, and go away, and never think of it again, and this without being of an irreligious character or habits, nay, even the reverse! Devout persons may do so who read, meditate, and pray, not only on the Sunday, but in the week likewise. The explanation is this, viz., that with many, every hour, almost every moment has its appointed occupation of one kind or another, either necessary or innocent, often useful or

praiseworthy, so that unless they make time for dwelling on the instruction they have received at church, they find not the suitable moment for this exercise; and thus they receive the Word unfruitfully, and are in danger of finding themselves among those spoken of in the parable of the Sower.

But there are lessons which come home, and are not so easily forgotten. For instance, when full of schemes, when planning work for God and His Church, it is well to reach the Christian day of rest, to pause and pray, and if it happens at such a time that the Church sets before us the touching history of Elijah in the wilderness, how suitable is the lesson thus imparted to us by these striking words, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"¹ and the comments on them as the preacher goes on to apply them to ourselves, to our trials,—often brought on ourselves,—to our joys and pleasures, (for we are born to these also, and not only to trouble,) God "giveth us richly all things to enjoy,"² to our occupations, our duties, &c.; reminding us that it will be happy for us if we can answer that question, "What doest thou here?" satisfactorily, and are always in such places and occupied in such a manner that we shall not be ashamed to be found there should the hour of our death overtake us.

 ¹ *1 Kings* xix. 9.

² 1 Tim. vi. 17.

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

How affecting is the view of this world and all in it as presented to us by one who, though the wisest man on earth, (at least in his time,) could only attain to discerning the painful anomalies, imperfections, contradictions, contrasts, and all those perplexing characteristics of this lower world, which meet our view also, and occasion to those amongst us, who are given to reasoning on what we see, many a disheartening thought, and lead to many vain questionings. I say “affecting,” since we can all but too well sympathise with the plaintive lamentations of the preacher, that “all is vanity.” He had found no key to unlock these mysteries of nature and Providence, whereas to the most simple and unlearned amongst Christians it is given to know the meaning of what was to him, with all his wisdom, so dark, and full of painful perplexity. And we perceive the same even in David, his father, (the man after God’s own heart,) as is expressed in that touching Psalm, the 73rd; his comprehension of the enigma of human life, even after he had sought its explanation by means of prayer in the Sanctuary of God, did not extend beyond

¹ Eccles. i. 2.

discerning the evil end of the wicked, and the safety and desirableness of cleaving to the **LORD**, come what might, and however much it might appear that affliction was the allotted portion of God's faithful servants: whilst to us it has been revealed that this life is verily not a life; that it is only the beginning and first part of an existence which shall be endless; that we are now, as it were, only in the vestibule of life, and blessed are we in this knowledge. And yet *we* cavil, and question, and complain of the transitory, imperfect, and unsatisfactory nature of earthly things, even as Solomon did who lacked the privilege we enjoy of a Divine Revelation to crown his gift of human wisdom and science.

S. Matthew xvii. 4.

How often when we find ourselves in some new and delightful locality we are prone to say as it were in our hearts, "it is good for us to be here," too truly, like S. Peter, "not knowing what he said," "let us make here tabernacles;" for how do we know whether it would prove as good for us as it is gratifying to our tastes or feelings?

But how does our “FATHER in heaven” answer this thought of our hearts? What said He to the forward and loving apostle? “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.” May we not take this in a practical sense, applying it to ourselves thus; “behold My beloved Son, your SAVIOUR, in Whom I find all My delight, and shall He not suffice you, that you must go and seek other delights?” And then it is added that when the disciples “looked up they beheld none save Jesus.”¹ And if we can but turn our eyes away from looking down on earthly things, and look up towards heaven where JESUS sits at the right hand of God, we shall learn to see nothing but JESUS with the inward eye, whatever objects may be spread around us.

“Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father,” &c.²

WHAT did JESUS do? He turned to His FATHER. Why do not we the same always, and address our FATHER in heaven at once, whatever trouble it be wherewith we are troubled? Moreover, we have also a SAVIOUR to

¹ Verse 8.

² S. John xii. 27.

turn to, Who is our Friend, our Brother, our Guide, our Comforter, and Who invites all the weary and heavy laden to come to Him.

S. Andrew.

S. ANDREW rejoiced when he saw the cross, which was to be the means of his going to rejoin his heavenly Master. We are called upon this day to make this holy apostle and martyr our particular example; but how can we do so as regards the crowning act of his glorious life? Is it not evident at first sight that we can and ought to imitate him in his readiness to obey the Divine call, and to follow CHRIST in a self-denying life; in his eager seeking to bring those he loved best to know their LORD and SAVIOUR, in his charitable desire that all who were willing should come to know Him also? It may occur to some minds that a willingness to face death at the call of duty or that of charity may be enjoined by S. Andrew's willingness to die, or that what is required of us is merely a general readiness to submit to the universal sentence, which has passed upon all men, when God sees fit to summon each one of us. But should we not go further than this,

and see in the blessed apostle's joy at the sight of the painful instrument of death, which was to take him to his Master, an intimation to all true lovers of their **Lord**, that any means should be welcome which will lead them into His presence ; not only the last sickness or the sudden accident, which will speedily admit them to it, but also the gradual decay, the lingering disease, the various forms of suffering with which mortality is visited in this dying life of ours, since they lead us all to the end of that pilgrimage which must be completed by us, ere we can reach that heavenly shrine, where is contained the end of all our longings.

What a different light would thus be cast on the whole subject of sickness, and all its trials, which are so hard for human nature to bear, unless upborne by heavenly grace. How would murmurings be silenced, and discontent vanish and give place to serenity and even cheerfulness of deportment. But, alas, it must be remembered as to bodily sufferings in common with other severe trials, that "the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak."¹ That eminent sufferer, Silvio Pellico, declared that he found a joy in carrying on daily struggle to show calmness and placidity under continual and varied trials and anguish of mind and body, in order

¹ S. Matth. xxvi. 41.

not to sadden and depress those who endeavoured to shed brightness about his sad path ; but he owned also that it was a daily warfare, and we must none of us expect to find it an easy one.

On Love and Friendship.

“ If we would build on a sure foundation in friendship, we must love our friends for their sakes rather than for our own. We must look to their truth to themselves full as much as at their trouble to us.”—*From C. Bronte’s Life : Letter to W. S. Williams, Esq.*

This quotation and much that preceded it, leads to many deep thoughts on the subject of the ordinary source of men’s loves and friendships, and we are almost obliged to ask ourselves whether in truth most of these are not based on self-love, and may not deserve to be called by that name rather than by any higher and purer in its signification. Perhaps it will not do to go too deep into so intricate a subject ; perhaps our affections will not bear analyzing ; but I am induced to make some researches in that direction, as the result may be of a very practical nature. Let us then distinctly ask, what is it which mortals seek in a husband or a wife, a

friend or a companion? Is it not for something which will be useful, pleasant, agreeable, beneficial, congenial, helpful, &c., to themselves? A man seeks in a wife for a congenial and cheering companion of his fireside, some one who shall brighten his *days* and soothe his cares and sorrows: some, indeed, look rather for one who will adorn their table, and do them honour in the sight of other men. And what do men seek in a friend or companion? For one from whom they may gain information, receive good counsel, have sympathy in time of need, and in whose society they may ever find both solace and delight. If this be true, or taken for granted, let us now ask whether all this is blameable, and whether it is to be expected of any that they should do the reverse of these things. Is a man called on to exercise such a spirit of self-sacrifice as to choose for his wife one who can be no help to him, (particularly supposing him to be in such a condition of life that he has to gain his own living,) or who, from an ungentle and unamiable temper, will be sure to make his fireside miserable; or one who possesses no outward and agreeable advantages? Surely not. Again, is any one to select as friend or daily companion one whose tastes and tempers, principles and peculiarities are uncongenial with his own, so that his com-

panionship and society never could yield delight to him ? I suppose not. What then is the solution of the difficulty ? It is this : that as regards those ties which are of God's forming and not our own at all, viz., those of relationship, we are bound to love, and to love enduringly, even where all these desirable qualifications are wanting, and that as a duty which will be sure to bring its own reward in this world or the other : but as regards those ties which are of our own seeking, we are free in the first instance, viz., as to the choice itself, to make it from motives of self-love, and with our own interest in view ; but having once made it our position is altered, and we are henceforth bound to love on, through all discouragements and trials of our affection, as much as in the case of relationship by blood. This is manifestly the case as respects the sacred and indissoluble tie of holy matrimony ; but it may not at first sight appear to be as clearly so with regard to those of friendship : yet even in this case having once formed for ourselves a sort of tie and bond, is there not something of injustice and of cruelty in suffering it to be broken by the falling off in the friend of that, which at first constituted his title to our regard and liking, whether that be beauty, or power of mind and intellect, or his ability to be service-

able to us any longer. The question resolves itself into this; is there or is there not a virtue in constancy *per se*? and is not inconstancy in itself something despicable, or at least unlovely, and which we are all of us prone to condemn, as it were, by instinct, and without analysing our reason for so doing? Perhaps the true merit of constancy consists in this, that it makes us more like to God, Who is the “I AM” Who changeth not, “Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:” whereas inconstancy likens us the rather to the Evil One, who abode not in his first estate, but changed his allegiance, and who is the author of all change and confusion in the world. Moreover, we are continually exhorted throughout the Scriptures to steadfastness, immoveability, abiding firm, &c., as to that which is well-pleasing and acceptable to God, and our own consciences bear witness to the admonition.

“Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died.”¹

Is it not worthy of remark that the very same exclamation should have escaped from the lips

¹ S. John xi. 21.

of both the sisters of Lazarus, when they beheld our Blessed Lord on the memorable occasion of His visit to them, after the death of their beloved and bitterly-lamented brother? May we not infer from this, that these words were the outpouring of a deep feeling, so natural and spontaneous in their case, that we may well suppose ourselves to be all liable to the same, under circumstances in any degree similar to theirs?

But how shall we interpret these words so full of anguish, which sound so like a reproach, or a kind of tender respectful upbraiding of "the Master," Whom they dearly loved, but Whose demeanour towards them in this instance they could not understand, which had been the cause of much distress to them, and (even as it now appears to them) of needless distress and anguish; for if He had only been on the spot sooner, their "brother had not died," since He surely would not have allowed so great a calamity to befall those whom He loved so well? Thus they felt, and thus they manifested their belief in His power and in His love, but not in the perfect wisdom of His acts. In this respect they showed a degree of practical unbelief, venturing to question the propriety of His staying afar off during the time of their greatest need of His Presence. He Who had hitherto

manifested so tender a regard for each member of their family, why had He failed them now? Truly the trial of their faith was great; but the result would be that their faith, now weak and imperfect, would be strengthened, and His power and glory manifested before the world. There were indeed deeper reasons why all these things had been permitted to happen as they did, which these weeping sisters little knew. The resurrection of Lazarus was to be the prelude to the death of his Deliverer.

Thus often in the events of our daily lives, we are the unconscious instruments of the far-reaching purposes of God being wrought out, and perhaps the remembrance of this might serve to explain to us, or at least to make us wonder less at events which befall us or ours, and for which we can discern no adequate cause. Had we more patience to let God work out His will by any means which He sees fit to employ, all would be well, and there would be fewer murmurs at the darker dispensations of Providence, which baffle our imperfect vision. But where is that faith? It is beyond the reach of most of us, although some of God's saints have doubtless attained to it; and they now shine as beacon lights to us during our voyage through the great deep, on which God's ways are not to be traced by mortal man.

Christ our Guest in Holy Communion.

THERE is nothing more strange, nor yet, alas ! more true, than that it is possible for us to receive such a Guest, no less than a Divine One, and yet be scarcely aware of the high privilege conferred on us, or keep it in remembrance. Truly, “the lust of other things entering in,”¹ makes this greatest of Christian gifts to be “unfruitful.” It may be, that we shrink from the idea of having such a Guest to entertain, and think the service required of us would be too irksome, did we attempt to pay Him the homage which His greatness and condescension in visiting us might justly claim at our hands : or else, that we dislike the thought of putting that restraint upon ourselves which attends the presence of visitors in our homes, as to apparel, habits, or occupations ; and would rather keep our ordinary ones, and not be called upon to suspend them, and live always, as it were, in holiday attire. And “haply half unblamed” might be such thoughts, if this were really the case as regards our heavenly Visitor, and our duties towards Him, but it is far from being so. Let us again make use of the analogy of earthly friends and distinguished

¹ S. Mark iv. 19.

guests, and we shall find that there are few indeed of these who require of us a burdensome homage, or that we should place an irksome constraint on our usual pursuits and daily duties. Certainly the most gifted persons, those most worthy of all honour, would be the last to do so ; rather, they would be anxious quickly to enter into, and sympathize with, all that interested us, to associate themselves with our occupations and pursuits, to share our burdens, and lighten our daily toils. And how does the Divine Guest of our souls make His presence to be felt amongst us in our homes and in our hearts ? Does He impose a burdensome service, or does He not rather come to " bear our burdens, and carry our sorrows," to lighten our griefs, and heighten our innocent joys ; to bless our labours, and sanctify our rest ; to be in fine, as a true Friend and Brother to us, " Whose conversation hath no bitterness, and to dwell with Whom is mirth and joy ? "

Such is the Guest Who comes to our souls in Holy Communion ; and is it not as sinful as it is strange and unaccountable, that we can be so forgetful of His nearness to us, so wanting in gratitude, so negligent in giving thanks and praise to Him Who forgets His own honour to secure our happiness and salvation, and to insure for us everlasting life with Him in heaven !

Holy Communion after Sickness.

WHAT a wonderful change in one's whole feeling and state of being, does this blessed Sacrament effect after the confinement and tedium, the trial and the sadness of a sick room, with its round of invalid habits and many burdens, necessary as they were at the time, and even up to the very moment of emancipation. How we have tottered from our chamber, half doubtful whether we were really fit (physically) for the effort, which yet we are resolved to make in faith, and with much thankfulness, since we were really permitted to do so. And with what a firm step we have returned! how unnecessary do those late appliances for ease and rest then seem. How we have felt like persons whose chains have fallen from their hands, our minds and bodies being alike freed from the bonds which had previously held them captive. What lightness of spirit; what a cheerful restoration to the society and converse of our loved ones. And what had in a short hour, effected so great, so marvellous, and so blessed a change? The presence of CHRIST with us, and within us. Is it not, as when those whom He healed on earth of their diverse infirmities, "cast away their garments" or "took up their

beds and walked," and followed their Deliverer, their Benefactor, their SAVIOUR, their new-found Friend ! How then can any persons be indifferent, or unbelieving, concerning a gift which reveals and proclaims its greatness and its value, by producing such gracious and wonderful effects !

The Holy Communion as a Feast on a Sacrifice.

IT is very usual to speak of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist as a gift beyond all that we could have looked for, or expected from God ; and so far as our deserts are concerned, no doubt it is so to an inexpressible degree. But in another sense, it might indeed have been looked for and almost expected, as the perfect fulfilment of all that was foreshown and promised by the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation, in which, not only what the law gave, but what it withheld, might likewise be hoped for. Therefore, as the sacrifices for sin were not permitted to be eaten, and the blood of them was commanded to be spilt on the ground, might it not be anticipated that all would be different with regard to the true sacrifice for the sin of the world, which

these bloody sacrifices typified and represented? And that henceforth in the commemorative representation of the same, the difference would be carried out, so that those who offer and those who partake thereof, may be allowed to eat and drink what had been denied them under the elder and less perfect dispensation? Is there not something more satisfactory and consistent with the analogy of God's dealings in this view of the institution of the Lord's Supper, by connecting it with His former gifts to man, and making it fit into its own place (as it were) amongst God's marvellous works, prepared before the foundation of the world, and foreshown by the prophets from David to Malachi?

“Then they willingly received Him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.”¹

SEVERAL of the Holy Evangelists relate the miracle of the loaves and the storm which succeeded it; but to the beloved Disciple it was reserved to record the above remarkable words, by which it would appear, as if by a miracle the ship had reached the land the very moment

¹ S. John vi. 21.

that our Blessed LORD had set foot therein. Yet we have no reason for believing this to have been the case; on the contrary, the language of another Evangelist makes it clearly appear, that the vessel gained the shore by the usual mode of approach. Still the words of the beloved Disciple must hold good, of whom it is written, "he that saw it bare record, and his record is true."¹ We must, therefore, look within for the meaning of the passage, and a very interesting spiritual interpretation will suggest itself; viz., that what JESUS wills should be done, is at once accomplished! How full of encouragement and comfort for us all is this thought. But it is not a bare imagination, or a mere deduction of our own. It is fully borne out by many passages in Holy Scripture. For instance, we read in Rom. viii. 30, "and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." He no sooner willed the salvation of man, than that work was already accomplished in His sight, so far as His part in it was concerned; and although, in fact, the poor frail bark of our eternal felicity was still at sea, and only at the outset of its long and perilous voyage, yet was it already in His sight as though "steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in cha-

¹ S. John xix. 35.

rity,"¹ we had so passed the waves of this troublesome world, as to have reached the land of everlasting life!

Wayside Crosses, and Cross Accidents.

WE usually think the fairest landscape improved by a Wayside Cross! Why do we not learn to look with the same eye on the little almost daily drawbacks, cross accidents, which meet us amidst all our engagements and pleasures here below, and which by showing us that CHRIST is present with us in them all (for where He is, there must be His Cross also,) do in fact make them to be really blessed, as coming from His and our FATHER's loving hand?

A Thought for the Weary.

WOULD a young warrior who had gone out to the war full of high hopes, and burning with military ardour, but who, by the will of GOD, returned after his first or second campaign wounded and disabled for active service for the

¹ Baptismal Service.

future,—would such a one sit down in hopeless despair and complain that he could do no more service for his king or country, that his life was blasted, and that his days must henceforth pass unprofitably? Or, if such were his thoughts and feelings when the bitterness of disappointment was pressing on him, would they abide, or would they give way to better and happier ones? Would he not find that there were yet ways open for him in which to serve both king and country, whilst home duties would open to him a wider field of action than he had found in them before, when he was meditating greater conquests? Would it not always console him to remember for whom he has incurred the wounds which had disabled him, even for his King in whose service he delighted? Meanwhile the wounds and scars of the hero who had fought and conquered, and in conquering had thus suffered, would be honourable in the sight of all. Oh! ye wounded ones in the battle-field of life, think on these things. What matters it whether death or wounds are met with, in the earlier or later part of the warrior's career, so they are met and borne in the service of the King of kings, Who will know how to reward all that have bled or suffered for Him!

On working for God.

How tempting is the offer of work, of work according to our mind: work for God—for His Church. It is hard to restrain the imagination from running riot and from building up some of those unsubstantial castles, which are so apt to crumble away at the first touch of reality. Still after several hard lessons, we learn in a measure to curb our fancies, and so can balance with some degree of firmness the advantages attending on an active life of labour with some good and holy end in view, and the various temptations which beset it, such as overengrossment, excitement, mixed motives, self-satisfaction, &c. A candid mind cannot blind itself to the existence of these dangers, and seeks therefore in earnest supplication to be kept from temptation, and to obtain that which is really best, praying the while that God's will may be done, in the full assurance that nothing accomplished against or without His will can be of any real advantage to us. Meanwhile, when an offer of work comes to any of us, as it seems to come from Him without Whom not even the most apparently insignificant circumstance in our lives befalls us; the temptation (if it must be deemed one) becomes *very subtle* and beguiling, making that appear

good for us which might really prove to be injurious to our spiritual welfare. But God wills not that we should close with the tempting offer, and it may be that our relinquishment of it is part of the probation He has appointed for us. Have we not (some of us at least) already experienced how wisely and mercifully the discipline of sickness, or some other earthly hindrance and impediment to an active life has been allotted to us, expressly as it now appears to shield us from the numerous perils and temptations which we are too weak to resist and overcome without such aid? If it be so with us, why wish for health and strength, liberty and opportunity, to work for God, since it may be safer and more according to His will that we should rather wait, bear and even suffer for His glory. Let us then learn to leave all to Him, to order for us as He sees best, without excitement or overanxiety, seeking really to be guided and directed by Him in all things.

Via Pacis. How to spend happy days.

To like the events of each day, not because they are in conformity with our wills, but because our will is in conformity with the events of each day.

"I knew that Thou hearest Me always."¹

MAY we without presumption take on our own lips the words used by our Blessed LORD, when, as He stood by the grave of Lazarus, He lifted up His eyes and said, "FATHER, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always?" Certainly they express what all feel who habitually seek God in prayer, and refer all things to Him, be it sorrow or joy, hopes or fears, anxieties or distresses: and what ineffable peace is the result, even in the midst of cares and trouble, and the inevitable fret and wear of human life. With great truth and beauty it has been said that "a life of prayer is a life of peace," for as we know that "He heareth us always," we also know that we shall be answered in His own time and way, and shall have all that is really good for us and for those whom we have commended to Him in earnest prayer. And who among us will not add his testimony to affirm that we never seek in vain for aid or guidance, if we ask with all our hearts, as those who seek to see the face of God in prayer in His Church and before His altar, or in the humble retirement of our own chamber? Has

¹ S. John xi. 42.

He not said, "Seek ye My Face;" and does not the soul answer with the Psalmist, "Thy Face, **LORD**, will I seek?"

Thoughts on the Clouds.

WHEN shall we learn to look on things as they are, and to set on them only their right value? With regard to this life, its joys and hopes, its interests and solicitudes, when shall we learn to look on it, not as something solid and durable, worthy of all our care and anxiety, but rather as resembling what it may well be compared to, viz., the vault of heaven when entirely veiled with clouds? This cloudy screen is sometimes very lovely to behold: it has many charms peculiar to itself: sometimes also it is awful in its beauty, big with portentous storms so as to rivet our attention and call forth our alarm. Many times we are fascinated by its soothing loveliness or gorgeous splendour, when "the outgoings of the morning and evening praise" their Maker. We gaze on the shifting scene with varied feelings of delight and wonder, and feel that the artist spoke truly who said that "even cloud pictures ought to be highly esteemed, and that we are apt to pass them over

too slightingly because they are pictures only in the clouds." So true it is that we do not lay any great store upon what is so proverbially transitory, changing, and unsubstantial, however great may be its beauty, however touching its soft loveliness. We feel that it is only a cloud after all: moreover these clouds are a veil hiding from us sun, or moon, or stars; and who would not rather behold the clear vault of heaven with its glorious luminaries, than the fairest canopy of cloud? No one in his senses would wish permanently to retain what hides from him that which is beyond, and which is so much better. We are glad that the clouds are transitory, changing, and unsubstantial, because we know they will fade and flee away, and leave disclosed the glorious clear sky above them. Yet what do we children of men do while we allow this life with its ever shifting ever varying interests to absorb us, and to usurp such a portion of our estimation that it would seem we account it to be something lasting, solid, and worthy of all our affections, desires, and hopes; instead of being, as it is too truly, only a cloud picture, a pageant formed of vapour, a screen partially or altogether obscuring and hiding from us the view of that which lies beyond—our true and eternal home in heaven?

On Happiness.

A MODERN writer has said, "Though evil certainly is in part our lot, in how much greater degree is good! For one unhappy person who is not made so by his own act, how many thousands are there who might realise happiness if they pleased." A strong and quaint expression, but true it is that men might be much happier than they are, that there is a kind of happiness which it depends in a great measure upon themselves whether they will possess or not; for God has put it partly in their own power, so that if they are miserable through the want of it, this is as much their fault as their misfortune. I allude to the happiness afforded by the exercise of the kindly affections both in the family circle and beyond it, by the cultivation of peace and harmony with all men, and most especially with those to whom God has bound us by any special tie of nature or choice. There is no limit to the joy and comfort which may by this means be ours, because there is none to the Divine grace of charity. It affords the nearest approach we know to the bliss of heaven, since we are sure that love of the highest kind both particular and universal forms the most essential part of the felicity of the

blessed above. We may thus antedate these joys in some small degree even here on earth with all its imperfections inseparable from our mortal state. What can present so near a resemblance to the blessedness of the other world as the sight of relations or friends worshipping in unison in the same temple of God, kneeling at the same altar, and feeding together upon the bread of life, while they are brought into nearer communion with the spirits of the blest

“Whom they have loved and missed awhile?”

There is enough of joy in moments such as these to fill our hearts with deep thankfulness for the possession of such blessings, and with compassion and sorrow for those who come short of it through wilful neglect or culpable negligence as regards the cultivation of family union and peace and goodwill towards all men. They may say it is not their fault but their misfortune that they find themselves, as it were, compelled to be at variance with some men, but is it so in truth? May we not “seek peace and ensue it,”¹ if we will? Is it not said that “when a man’s ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him?”² And would God have commanded

¹ 1 S. Pet. iii. 11.

² Prov. xvi. 7.

us that which it was impossible to fulfil? and yet we are expressly enjoined by the inspired Word of God, both in the Old and New Testaments, "if we would fain see good days," to obey this precept, and, "as far as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men,"¹ "to put on bowels of mercy, kindness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any,"² &c. And again writes S. Paul, "above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body."³

On Forgiving and being Forgiven.

FORGIVENESS of sin—this is what we need; to feel assured of it would secure our happiness even on earth. How grateful should we be then to any one who would point out a sure way of obtaining and securing it for our own. Well, this way has been pointed out; it is as certain as the infallible word of God can make it, that the greatest of treasures may be purchased by us at the price of forgiving others.

¹ Rom. xii. 18.

² Col. iii. 12, 13.

³ Col. iii. 15.

But what sort of forgiveness must it be? Let us consider a little. It must be a forgiveness that causes us to look on the offender with the same eye as if he had never offended us; that owes no grudges, feels no dislike in consequence of the offence, harbours no coldness in the heart towards him, thinks no worse of him on the whole because of that offence, never dwells on the remembrance of it, in fact does not remember it against him at all, likes and esteems him none the less for it, but excuses it, and makes light of it; in short it must be just such a forgiveness as we should like to meet with at the hand of God: for is not this the royal rule which we are bound to observe in all things, viz., to do to others what we would they should do to us;¹ to mete with the same measure that we would have measured to us? Moreover, what is the kind of forgiveness which we like to receive at the hands of one whom we have offended, a justly angered parent for instance? Is it a forgiveness which consists in saying it forgives, but which we know or fear does not forget? which looks on us with another eye than it did before we offended; which keeps a certain coolness in the heart. Oh, we can none of us bear such a partial and meagre forgiveness as this; it could never make us happy or

¹ S. Matth. vii. 12.

satisfy us ; and shall we deal only such a measure as this to others, and flatter ourselves we have done enough, even all that is required ? Our own consciences, our own hearts furnish the best answer : let us listen to them, they will not mislead us ; but the measure of forgiveness they will enjoin and enforce is something which exceeds the every-day standard current among men, as much as the mercy of God bestowed on us, each and all of us sinful children of men, surpasses that which we ordinarily extend to our fellow-offenders on earth.

S. Matth. v. 44, 45, 48.

“LOVE your enemies, that ye may be the children of your FATHER which is in heaven ; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. Be ye therefore perfect, as your FATHER in heaven is perfect.”

How strongly do these words bring before us the relationship into which we have been brought with God under the Christian Covenant. We are here spoken of as children, and the fitness of our resembling Him in character is pointed out, (if one may use such words

without irreverence,) in terms which might be used concerning a man and his earthly parent. We are all familiar with the expression so often on men's lips of "he is a true son of his father," or such like; and very natural are these resemblances between an earthly parent and his child: but that we should be spoken of in Holy Writ, nay, more, by our blessed LORD Himself when on earth, as having a sort of right to resemble our FATHER Which is in heaven "because we are His children," is an honour and a privilege with which we cannot but be highly impressed as we read these gracious words.

Temptation.

WHAT is it to be tempted? Is it not to have a will, a choice of our own, and to find ourselves devoid of that self-command which would enable us to deny that will, and relinquish that choice, when the doing so is an act of loyalty demanded of us by God, and the not doing so is a dereliction of our duty to Him. S. James tells us that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away (that is, attracted and led) of his own lust: then when lust hath conceived, it

bringeth forth sin.”¹ And whence proceeds this—our liability to temptation, or to being blinded by desire, which, as it were, throws dust in our eyes that we may not see we are being misled until we open our eyes to discover that we have been hoodwinked and led away by the deceitfulness of sin, into offending against God, grieving the HOLY SPIRIT, and wounding our own consciences? Is it not because our wills are so little conformed through love to God’s will? because we are so little united with His Will, are so seldom, if ever, without a choice, that is, a will of our own on any matter? Were it otherwise, how should temptation have so great a power over us? But then it may be said in answer to this, that since our Divine Redeemer was perfectly united to God, “holy, harmless, and undefiled,”² He must have been (according to this view) wholly beyond the power of temptation, and yet we read in the passage of Scripture before us that He was tempted. What does this mean? and how can we reconcile such apparently discordant passages of Holy Writ as these, viz., where He says through David, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God, yea, Thy law is within My heart,”³ and again when He tells the disciples that His

¹ S. James i. 14, 15.

² Heb. vii. 26.

³ Ps. xl. 8.

meat is “to do the will of Him that sent Me,”¹ with such as these, viz., where the Prophet Isaiah says of Him, “He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears;”² and where He says of Himself, “I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me;”³ and again in that most touching passage where He says, “Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? FATHER, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. FATHER, glorify Thy Name.”⁴ Lastly, in that most solemn and awful one, where we hear Him pray, “FATHER, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.”⁵ Had He then indeed a will diverse from, and which could be opposed to, that of His heavenly FATHER, or said He things wholly for our sakes, for our encouragement and example? In the history of the temptation in the wilderness we find Him actually assailed by the suggestions of the Evil One, who would have had Him yield impatiently to the desire for bodily relief, trust presumptuously in the Providence and promises of God, and obtain the proffered gift of power and dominion at the price of an act

¹ S. John iv. 34.

² Isa. xi. 3.

³ S. John vi. 38.

⁴ S. John xii. 27.

⁵ S. Luke xxii. 42.

of homage to the Prince of this world, and of dereliction towards His heavenly FATHER; all of these He repelled by the weapons furnished in the Word of God; and more than this we know not, neither can we presume to penetrate into so great and fathomless a mystery as the temptation by the Evil One of the all-holy SON of God. We are assured by S. Paul for our comfort, that "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."¹ We, therefore, who are but the sinful children of man, cannot hope ever to attain to so high a degree of uniformity with the will of God, as that we should not be liable to be often tempted and led away to fulfil the devices and desires of our own hearts. But shall we therefore despair and give up all attempt to unite our will to that of our heavenly FATHER by filial love? Far be this from us, since we know that to attain to any height of virtue we must aim much higher than we can hope to reach. Let us then aim at the highest, so may we attain to some measure of that blessed conformity with the will of God, from which proceeds true peace and strength to resist temptations when they arise.

¹ Heb. iv. 15.

The Holy Days after Christmas.

HAS it not occurred to many among us to wish the Church had not appointed, that these holy days should follow so closely upon Christmas Day, thereby distracting our thoughts from the blessed Mystery commemorated on that most joyous of our religious festivals, and breaking in on its holy calm with thoughts of suffering and scenes of martyrdom? Should we not prefer that Christmas Day had been left to stand alone, or had been prolonged by the addition of other days dedicated to the same mystery, as in the case of Easter and Whitsuntide? Does not Christmas seem to be thus dethroned all too soon from its supreme sovereignty over all our thoughts and affections at this holy season? Let us, however, examine whether our regret is not unfounded, and one which, like many of our religious perplexities, proceeds from an imperfect realization of that which nevertheless we are earnestly endeavouring to realize and enjoy. Now with regard to the cheering festival of the Nativity which we cannot bear to see dimmed in its brightness by the intervention of other lights, is our fear a reasonable one? Surely, if we have built, as it were, and *consecrated* a little oratory in our hearts where-

in the Divine Infant holds His court, and receives the homage of our affections and our devotion, we shall be looking out for means whereby to honour Him, and for offerings to bring Him, and then shall we not hail most joyfully the approach of the noble army of martyrs as represented by S. Stephen the proto-martyr, and the Church of the first-born, personated in S. John and the Holy Innocents, all of whom are now bringing their palms and crowns to the Holy Child in the stable and the manger, and cast them down at His sacred Feet? Who could have been chosen as more fitted for the honour of being the first to draw near the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot, foreordained before the foundation of the world, than that company of children and child-like souls who are now rising before our eyes like the bright stars of the winter skies? Here are the young and the pure in heart, the holy and devoted S. Stephen, the first to shed his blood for the Lord; S. John, whom we behold a little later leaning on his Master's Bosom; the little infants who unconsciously honoured Him as their King, though so lately born amongst them, by losing their "little span of life" in His stead, to find eternal life laid up for them in His heavenly kingdom for ever.

How beautiful, moreover, is the thought that

all the blessed saints may be considered now and ever to be doing homage to their great King, for thus are they revealed to us by the inspired pen of S. John himself, as “a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”¹

The Song of Birds melancholy.

THERE is something in the song of birds in the spring-time of the year, which after early youth is passed and the autumn of life is approaching, thrills the heart too deeply to excite a sensation of joyousness, though the song in itself is a joyous one, and would convey that impression to an unbiassed mind. Is it not that there is too much of association connected with the sound, and recollection generally wears an imprint of sadness? For the same reason music, as life wears on, is apt to sadden rather than to cheer, and we begin to

¹ Rev. vii. 9, 10.

think that we are mistaken when we say, (as it were from habit,) that we are "fond of music." It is too much interwoven with souvenirs, and bears too often on its wings the voices which we can never hear again till we hear them, if this be granted to us, united in chorus with those of angels, and of the blessed in heaven. But to return to the song of birds, whose animating notes should rather assist us to lift up our hearts, than cause them to sink in depression. How shall this be? May we not attain to it by striving to associate with their songs things not of earth, which do but perish in the grasp, but things in heaven, and, "while we may," lift our faces to the skies?

"For God's promise it is sure,
His rewards, they shall endure."

Thus shall it come to pass that "Spring sang of heaven." And how does it sing? Surely more by the sweet song of birds than by the new garb with which it decks the earth, and preaches to us of a future resurrection and regeneration of the earth and heaven. That that which recalls recollections of the past should be melancholy, proceeds, if we analyze the source of our feelings, from the fact that it speaks of unfulfilled hopes and longings, and that it brings before us a saddening retrospect

of disappointed or only partially fulfilled expectations and attempts: that it preaches loudly of the brevity, uncertainty, unsatisfying nature of earth's best gifts and prizes. We can overcome this mortifying and painful impression of the past and its failures only by cultivating in lieu of it a lively anticipation of future solid and satisfying joys "laid up for us" and ours "in heaven," when the time shall come for the "redemption of the purchased possession."¹

Love for Autumn.

SEVERAL reasons have been suggested, but none that appear wholly satisfactory, why Autumn should be preferred by some to Spring, that favourite season of which so much has been said and sung. I am more disposed to trace a connection between this feeling and that which we all have concerning friendships, according to that which we read, "Forsake not an old friend, for the new is not comparable to him,"² &c. It is true that the first dawn of a new friendship, like the first breath of spring, is full of undefined hopes and expectations, and like that sends a thrill of joy and delight

¹ *Ephes. i. 14.*

² *Ecclesi. ix. 10.*

through our whole being ; but just as after the earliest day of spring, there follow many chilly and bleak ones, and as the progress towards summer is slow and tedious, so with our friendships. The touch of reality dissolves the golden haze which illuminated our first impressions, and which imagination had a great part in weaving around the objects of them, and the springtide of a new friendship is often very disappointing. But when we have passed together through all the summer-time, with its bright days and not unfrequent storms, through the hot sunshine of trial and temptation, then we feel we are old friends, and the remaining days of our intercourse, ere the winter of death separates us, are very sweet, the more so for the pensive sadness which overshadows them, even as the autumnal haze which partially veils the bright hues and cheering sunshine of an October day. The very knowledge that the beauties of the autumnal season will not be of long duration, makes us the more anxious to enjoy them to the utmost while they last, and the anticipation of a long separation, and of parting for ever in this world, gives an additional zest to the days which it is yet granted us to spend together on earth.

Characters and Voices.

SOME female characters may be likened to a beautiful voice, of which we say that it is of great compass. The deep contralto tones may be compared with the sensibility, tenderness, sympathy, and warm affections of the character we would describe; while the high clear notes are like the sparkling vivacity and gaiety which startle by their contrast; and the intervening octaves, are the gentle, every-day, unshowy virtues, ever in use, and the most necessary, though the least prized, as being more often to be met with. Perhaps the resemblance is not the less complete, because, in such a voice, there is usually some one or more notes on which it fails, naturally requiring much care and culture to counteract the weakness; for where is the character to be found on earth which is wholly faultless, without one weak point, and not requiring peculiar discipline and a constant watchfulness?

An Uncommon Character.

THAT must be an uncommon character in a woman, the possession of which enables her to

seek rather to do good in society than to avoid harm, so that the subject of self-examination at night is not as to what unamiable feelings, or unguarded words, she may have been betrayed into, but what words she may have left unsaid which might have proved useful to the hearer, without any overforwardness in the speaker. Yet this is a true and living character.

Sufferers and Sympathizers.

DR. Johnson insists much on the duty of exactness of speech, so as never if possible to convey a false impression. How desirable it would be that persons should observe this precept when writing to others concerning any trial or trouble that may have befallen them, so as not to overtax the sympathy of the correspondent, or put a stone of stumbling in his way, by inducing him to question, or to cavil at the ways of Providence as regards his afflicted friend. As it is, people are very thoughtless on this point; they relieve themselves by complaining to others, and it does not occur to them how much harm they may do by their very partial disclosure of the truth, as regards their actual condition. They convey, perhaps, the

impression that they are perfectly miserable when they are in fact far from being so. They dwell on the evils which form part of their lot, and forget to speak of the compensations which likewise belong to it. They speak of the fresh troubles which have come upon them, but do not remind the hearer of the daily mercies which still abide with them. Thus, a very untrue view of their real case is taken by the sympathising friend who wonders at such sorrows being allowed to overwhelm any of God's creatures, and fancies them to be a burden almost too heavy to be borne. Thus also, the Creator's ways, and His Fatherly love and care are called in question ; and all this might be avoided by a more scrupulous adherence to truth, and by having the candour to say to a friend, "Now I do not wish you to make yourself miserable for me, for I am not so myself. Pity me, pray for me, but do not allow yourself to be too much depressed by the thought of my troubles, as though I were pressed too hard, or were without consolation and support under them." It is a good plan also to tell your friend what you would particularly wish him to ask for you in prayer. This will not only facilitate his doing so, and make him more disposed to do it than he might be if left with the vague impression of having to pray, scarce

knowing what he should ask for ; but it will go a long way towards giving him a correct insight into the state of your mind at that time, and of the real nature of your grief. Of course his prayer need not be bounded by that injunction ; he may use his own discretion, nay, he may even see it to be fitting to ask for things different from, or even the opposite of what you have bid him to seek for ; but the end will be obtained, viz., the real good of the sufferer without hurt and detriment to the sympathiser.

A Passing Thought.

THE Nightingale is known to sing all the time he has a nest to watch and keep. He sits opposite to it, looks at it, and sings unceasingly as it would seem, but it is said that he takes the place of the other parent sometimes, and then he does not sing, for, so doing, he would betray the place of his dear nest. What a thrilling song it is ! Is it sad or joyful ? Is there at least some sadness mingled with the gushing joy which whistles through so many of its notes ? If there be that admixture of sadness, may it not possibly be that sadness which dwells so near to joy, that

when the latter reaches its greatest heights of ecstasy, it touches on the dominion of sorrow, and carries away a shade from her face? Who has gazed on the exquisite Assumption of Guido at Genoa, and not been struck by the expression so akin to grief, of that enraptured heaven-seeking countenance? All joy, without that shade of sorrow, would not have the depth, the holiness necessary for the idealization of the most perfect happiness. Does not this thought teach us the nature of that bliss which is allotted to redeemed man in heaven? a joy different in kind, perhaps more intense, than that enjoyed at the creation by the angels, when "all the sons of God shouted for joy"¹ in their innocent unclouded glee, that truly childlike happiness, of which the unthinking joy of childhood on earth offers a faint resemblance. But to return to the nightingale. He sings all day, whatever be the weather. The most unceasing rain quenches not his joy, checks not his expression of it. What an example to thankless murmuring man (who is so soon dejected by a little cheerless weather,) bidding him if he has a home, full of beings he loves, to rejoice and be glad, whatever the weather may be without, and chiding him for his forgetfulness of benefits.

¹ Job xxxviii. 7.

On Working for God.

“WHAT is that to thee? Follow thou Me.”¹ Might not this remarkable reply of our Blessed LORD to the inquiry of His ardent Disciple, S. Peter, be applied with a more extended signification to many an earnest-minded Christian in these days, for the repressing of unprofitable curiosity concerning many things, to the injury of simpleness of aim and purity of motive? Might it not be said to those who while they are really desirous to devote themselves, and all which is theirs, to the service of God, and to His glory, allow themselves to pause in their work, from time to time, in order that they may ascertain what has been achieved, and how and what have been the results and the profit of their labour? who love to see this profit, and hold it as it were in their hand as the reward of their toil; in short, to have some present reward and to enjoy the same. Of such it may be said, that they are good workmen, yet to them may be addressed, not in accents of stern rebuke, but in tones of gentle admonition, “What is that to thee, follow thou Me,” which may thus be interpreted, “What is it you are really working for? Is it for Me simply,

¹ S. John xxi. 22.

and to advance My glory, and fulfil My purposes, or is it to gain honour from men, and to live in their mouths? If for Me, be careful that ye be not deceived, and drawn aside from simpleness of heart and purpose, lest you lose your reward.” Again, some are wont to be busy about the affairs and actions of other men, to inquire willingly about the manner in which they carry on the work of their Divine Master, and they readily pass censure, or give their applause, according as the actions of others coincide with their own views of right and wrong. They forget that of these their fellow-workmen, it may be said, “To their own Master they shall stand or fall.” “What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.” What is right for one may not be so in the case of another. If your own path has been marked out for you by an unerring hand, and it has been granted you to discern and walk in it, let that suffice you, continue in it, without seeking to ascertain whether many have been invited to tread the same path or not; that is nought to thee; follow thou thy **LORD**. Nothing in these remarks, however, is meant to imply that men should be indifferent as to what is doing around them, and in the Church at large; far from it; nay, there is much evil which accrues even now to the Church *from many zealous labourers, isolating them-*

selves too much in their work, and thus arriving at a distorted view of the relative importance of things, and bestowing much labour in vain oftentimes upon trifling or unessential matters, to the comparative neglect of that which is really important in the sight of God. All that is intended is to suggest that there is with some, too great a desire to see all things with the eyes, and enjoy the fruit of their labour here and now. Doubtless this reward is given to some, and when permitted from on high, it may be enjoyed without misgiving; but how often do we see it withholden even from the most faithful and beloved of God's servants. Many a time has the bed of sickness detained the founder and builder of some fair fane, erected at his cost for the worship of God, and to the glory of His name, at the proud moment of its dedication to His service.

These things are looked on as untoward accidents and subjects for regret, and nothing further; but they are of sufficiently frequent occurrence to induce us to look on them as traceable to a particular dispensation of God's Providence, and to see in it an indication that there is something better, and a privilege more blessed than for a man to behold the work of his hands, and hear his own praises sounded by the mouths of numbers among his fellow men.

The inward consciousness of God's approval, the "still small voice," breathing the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant,"¹ is a higher reward than the beholding of his accomplished work, with the danger of losing something of his purity of aim and object. He knows the evil of mixed motives, shrinks from them, and ever hears the gracious but awful words of his **LORD**, "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast, which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."²

Conversion of S. Paul.

"**LORD**, what wilt Thou have me to do?"³ Observe the words of Saul, when struck to the ground and dazzled by the light of **CHRIST**'s glorious Presence, he believes that He Who speaks to him with such overwhelming proofs of Power and Majesty, is indeed no other than "JESUS of Nazareth," Whom he has up to that moment *persecuted* to the death. "**LORD**, what wilt Thou have me to do?" No words could have expressed more fully, the entire prostration of his spirit before a superior power, which had suddenly and at once succeeded to his

¹ *S. Matth. xiv. 21.*

² *Rev. iii. 11.*

³ *Acts ix. 6.*

self-confidence and lofty bearing. How unlike this, is the spirit manifested in many of us, when awakened to a sense of duties neglected, of a wrong course pursued hitherto, and the desire to act very differently for the time to come! We are prone *to ask ourselves what we should do* for God! He asked his Lord what *He* would have him to do. Accordingly he was guided *to* Ananias in the first instance, and then *by* him, even as our Lord had said to him, in answer to his humble appeal, “Arise, and go into Damascus, and it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.” We read that he was led by the hand to Damascus, and ever after, through the whole of his course, he was as one *led* or *sent* to fulfil the will of God, rather than as one who shaped his own course. First, we find the disciples at Damascus “taking him” and letting him down by the wall in a basket when his life was endangered by the fury of the Jews: next, it is the Apostle Barnabas who “takes him,” and brings him to the Apostles, and acts as mediator between him and the disciples at Jerusalem, who had difficulty in believing him to be truly a disciple. And when on one occasion he would fain have been the disposer of his own life, and chose in his heart rather to preach the Gospel amongst his own nation, than to the Gentiles,

even *after* our **Lord** had Himself appeared to him in the temple while he prayed, and was in a trance, bidding him "make haste and depart out of Jerusalem," that gracious Master Himself became his Guide, adding,¹ "Depart, for *I* will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Thus we see that this great vessel of election was to do and suffer many and great things for his **Lord**, but only as an instrument in the hands of that **Lord**, and nothing as of himself. What a lesson to human pride! what a lesson to us! and how much we need it, prone as we are to trace out paths for ourselves, to choose our own work, never doubting but that we are in the *right* way, and doing that which is well-pleasing to God, provided we are doing work for Him, but forgetting to ask Him *first* whether our faces be set in the right direction, and whether we *are* in truth doing what *He* would have us to do! If our servants were to serve us in this independent manner, should we consider ourselves *well* served? Should we not rather be displeased? Were they to execute some work of mere ornament for *us*, when we had useful work that needed to be done, should we thank them much for the pains they had bestowed on it, to *please* us, as they deemed, but in reality, in detriment to the service which we had looked

¹ *Acts xxii. 21.*

for at their hands? This is then a safe test by which to try our service towards our Heavenly Master. Is it that which a good servant would do? Or are we still bent on self-pleasing, and deceiving ourselves into the belief that we are working for CHRIST? Surely the right thing for each of us to do, is to ask and seek honestly to discover what *that* portion of work is, which our Master in heaven has allotted for us, and for which we shall be responsible when He comes to take account of His servants concerning the talents which He has entrusted to each of them. To the performance of this with diligence and conscientiousness, we should apply our whole care, and our most earnest endeavours, but beyond this we should not trouble ourselves at all: and is not our whole duty expressed in the petition we make each time we unite in the Thanksgiving in our Office for Holy Communion, when we ask that we may still continue in the holy fellowship of the Mystical Body of CHRIST, which is the blessed company of all faithful people, and do those good works which God would have us to do?

Let us then be content, like S. Paul, to be led by the hands, as not seeing, and needing guidance, rather than to follow our "own devices and desires," and let us not despise such

holy subservency and subjection, as suited only to "babes in CHRIST," remembering that to childlike souls alone is promised the kingdom of heaven.

S. Philip.

"PHILIP findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write ; JESUS of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."¹

I have never seen these words of S. Philip particularly remarked upon as giving evidence of a strong and clear belief beyond what was possessed even by the other Apostles, excepting of course the famous confession made by S. Peter : but surely it is worthy of especial notice and praise, that such words should have been addressed by S. Philip to Nathaniel, a man of superior birth and education probably, and we cannot but admire the simplicity and boldness which caused the new disciple of an (as yet) unknown and unrecognized Teacher, to confess so firmly his belief that the Son of a carpenter in a small city of the despised country of Galilee, was indeed the Messiah so long foretold,

¹ S. John i. 45.

so much waited for, and Whose coming was not expected to be after so humble a manner. We are the more surprised at these proofs of belief in that which had as yet no outward manifestation, because the Apostles so often in the course of our blessed Lord's ministry, fell far short of a full and perfect belief, so as to call forth many a gentle and loving rebuke. How often have we felt astonished at their want of faith, and have been inclined to pass a harsh judgment upon them, thinking perhaps that *we* should have been more ready to believe, more quick in understanding. But what presumption is this! How utter an ignorance does it show of ourselves, and our own sin of practical unbelief, by which we offend continually. Who among us is not compelled to confess that his own active faith in the blessed doctrine of a resurrection and another life (the very truth which the Apostles were so slow in apprehending,) is quite as weak as theirs, and that without the same causes of justification: for what was future to them is past to us. "CHRIST *has* risen, and is become the first-fruits of the resurrection." Yet where is our faith, when our loved ones are taken from us, or when this life becomes a burden through sickness or loneliness, or from any other cause? Is our expectation of a brighter scene, a happier land, so

lovely, that we cheerfully and unrepiningly endure the “manifold temptations” which cause our temporary “sadness?” If we did realize, but in part and faintly, the joys of that future state which is promised and pledged to us, after this our time of probation is over, could we utter a single complaint? would a murmuring voice be heard among us? Surely not. It is plain, therefore, that we do not believe, save with that passive faith which honours God but little, and affords small comfort to ourselves. Very different was the nature of the faith of that poor peasant, who expressed to a good Bishop a great desire to know whether or not he was likely to recover from his sickness, because the descriptions he had heard of heaven and of Paradise caused him to long so earnestly to depart thither. Such a desire has need to be tempered by resignation, but it is only rational in a Christian; and oh! that it were more common, that by patience and comfort of the Holy Word of God, we did indeed embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which has been given us through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! Then should we no longer be put to shame by those, whose eager desire for some temporal good is an intimation to us of what should be our desire for the things eternal. *Those*, who await an earthly bridal, rejoice at

the close of each day which brings them nearer to their expected happiness, and should not Christians feel the same, when awaiting the return of the Bridegroom of their souls Who is coming to claim them for His own, and take them to dwell with Him for ever in His heavenly mansions, if they have indeed learnt here below to "love His appearing?"¹

S. James the Great.

How can *we* imitate this saint? There are but few of his actions which are recorded for our imitation. We hear often of his readiness to obey his Master's call at the lake. But there is one more way in which he evinced readiness to obey His call, where likewise we may all imitate him. His boldness and demeanour at the hour of death, when condemned by a tyrant to a violent and bloody martyrdom, converted the soldier who was to execute the sentence, and made of him a follower of CHRIST and a martyr. If we, by our readiness to meet sudden death, or by our willingness to endure whatever painful sickness is the messenger of death to us, should allure to CHRIST, and to

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 8.

His religion any who had not hitherto felt and owned its power, we shall have a share in the blessedness of the saint of this day.

On Working for a Master.

How inspiring to labour it is to have a task to accomplish, some one to whom to give account for the spending of our time, and whose approbation we hope to gain, if we have turned it to good account. Thus it is, with regard to any earthly study or pursuit, especially that of painting. Ah! why do we not remember and bear continually in mind, that we have a Master in heaven; that all our works form part of the task imposed on us by Him to Whom we shall have to give account for the use of all our time; that His approbation or displeasure alone will be of real consequence to us in eternity. If having an earthly Master quickens our endeavours, makes us eager to lose no moment of time on trifling things, gives point to our existence, preventing languor and aimlessness, and serving as much for encouragement as stimulus, why should it not be the same with regard to spiritual matters? Time is ever flowing on as *a river*; this is a trite saying, do we really lay

it to heart? Should not the thought of a Heavenly and Almighty Master, be more constraining as a motive for action, daily, hourly, than that of a human being whose breath is in his nostrils, who is erring in judgment, however great his knowledge? Shall not the thought of the omniscience of God be a comfort to us, as well as a cause for fear and reverential awe before Him? Surely it ought to be so; for as He knows us so perfectly, He knows all the good intent as well as the weak performance, the sincerity (if such there be) as well as the imperfection of our works. It is written, "the FATHER hath committed all judgment unto the SON," "because He is the Son of Man."¹

On Tasks and Masters.

WE are often inclined to find fault with the tasks imposed on us by a master when his presence is withdrawn. But when he is present, how different is our feeling: not only respect and propriety prevent our uttering a complaint, but we feel no inclination to do so. The whole aspect of things is changed: that which appeared irksome, becomes agreeable to us, be-

¹ S. John v. 22, 27.

cause there is no longer any clashing of our will with that of our teacher. What a change! and all this is the result of personal influence combined with respect.

If such is the case as regards worldly tasks, and an earthly master, how much more will it be so in a future state, when all at which we have been tempted to cavil in God's dispensations towards us, will change its aspect, and we shall neither venture to murmur against them, nor indeed feel any inclination to do so; our wills being at once at the sight of our heavenly Master fused into His, so that all, which He has ordained for us formerly, will appear to have been right and most desirable, as being the very best that could have been ordained for us. Such a thought in itself brings peace.

Waking Thoughts.

“But joy cometh in the morning.”¹

I know not whether it may be common to many, or an unfortunate peculiarity of my own; but with me joy is not the first thing to come naturally in the morning: I seldom rise with the same serenity with which I lay down to

¹ Ps. xxx. 5.

rest. If in some time of trouble (whether it be of bereavement, anxiety, or any kind of trial,) I have gone to rest with feelings of resignation, trust, and comparative cheerfulness, the result of meditation and prayer; I wake, and find that I have to begin the work over again, for those feelings have not awoke with me. Either they are yet asleep, or they have flown from me: I have to recall them to me again. Why is this? Has some evil spirit been permitted to approach, and rob me of my spiritual armour whilst I slept? But surely, if the guardian angel, to whom each one of us is entrusted, does indeed condescend to watch about us and guard our slumber through all the hours of night and darkness, he would not permit the foe to gain this advantage over us? No; we have not been robbed of our spiritual armour, for we find it lies quite near us, and we may quickly reinvest ourselves with it, if we will. True, we must take up each part, and put it on piece by piece (even as we do the several portions of our bodily clothing,) till we are once more armed *cap-à-pié*, and can boldly go forth to meet the encounters of the new day opening before us. Perhaps indeed it is thus ordered for us purposely, that we may have occasion to prove our loyalty to our Heavenly King by this slight daily effort and proof of our

renewed willingness to serve and fight for Him. Nay, moreover, this may be what is signified, in part, by that saying of our blessed LORD, that we must each take up our cross daily. How much is implied doubtless in these few words ! we must not merely endure that a burden should be laid upon us, nor may it suffice that we should continue to carry that with which we are already charged. But we must willingly take it up ourselves, and do this daily. How could this be if one day's work made that of the next (and of each succeeding one,) more and more easy ; and if there were no fresh struggle until some new trial came ? That service, which cost so little, would be less acceptable to God. Let us then thank Him, if He removes not from us a daily combat, which we may improve to His glory and our own salvation.

On the Round of Sacred Seasons.

It has frequently been pointed out, how wisely our Holy Mother the Church has acted in appointing certain seasons, for the commemoration of the divers events in the life on earth of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and of the various parts of the scheme of our redemption. But to speak

only of the greater Festivals and Fasts : how is it ordered that they should succeed one another as they do, leading us on,—yes, even compelling us,—sometimes to bow down our heads in humility and contrition before our Maker and our Divine Redeemer, sometimes to lift up our hearts, and rejoice before God. For is it not most true that many of us would be prone to do neither of these things, were we left wholly to ourselves and to our own guidance ? With some it may be needful to enforce periods of more serious thought, and of at least outward humiliation ; in the case of others, it may be equally necessary that spiritual joy should be inculcated as a duty, and made obligatory by the character of the sacred season. How saddening to many of us are the penitential offices and discipline of Lent ! while there are others who find in them so much which is congenial to their wants and spiritual infirmities, that it is only by a great effort they can bring themselves to relinquish them, and let them give place to the joy and exultation of Easter and Ascensiontide ! Such broken and contrite hearts, such bruised and dejected spirits, need to be lifted up by a powerful and loving Hand, which they dare not resist or disobey ; and very grateful have they occasion to be, that they are not left to themselves to guide their

own steps through a labyrinth of sorrow and misgiving, but that they have it plainly pointed out to them and made easy by the promptings of humble and filial obedience to the maternal Voice which has directed them from childhood, and will conduct them wisely and safely to old age by a well-trodden way, or in God's good time to their journey's end.

The Penitent Thief.

“**LORD**, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.”¹

Would it not appear as though the penitent thief had even then on the cross caught a glimpse as it were of that blessed truth, that to approach the cross is to win a right to the crown, and a portion in the glory of the Kingdom? The feeling which prompted his unusual request could be only an instinctive one, for he had not heard our **LORD** invite all men to take up the cross and follow Him, if they would be His disciples and be worthy of Him, whatever might be the precise import of those solemn and mysterious words. He had not the assurance conveyed to us by the Apostle,

¹ S. Luke xxiii. 42.

that "if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."¹ Yet we might almost imagine that he had, so confidently did he make his request, as if with the certainty of being favourably heard and answered. Oh, how beautiful and heart-consoling a doctrine is it, that to be partaker of the cross is to have a nearer interest in the SAVIOUR, in His promises, and His rewards! And which of us has not realised something of this blessed faith when sorrow has touched us? Which of us would willingly forego the fuller confidence in prayer enjoyed at such times, the greater consolation which entering His House and approaching His Altar imparts to the aching heart and burdened spirit? We felt then we could claim a right to draw nearer to Him, and to address Him with more filial love. Thus in a measure felt that penitent thief, though he could scarcely clothe in words the instinct of his heart, which impelled him to cry, "LORD, remember me," &c. He could better explain to the impenitent thief the unseemliness of his revilings of the sinless One, by owning himself a sinner, and that both were justly punished for their crimes; but the grounds of his own faith in CHRIST, and of his humble yet unfal-

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

tering petition, he could not explain even to himself; he could only offer it up to the Omnipotent Being Who had inspired it, and knew Who had sown the seed of that faith, and what gracious influences had made it grow and bear fruit in that unpromising soil. To us who may oftentimes have wondered at the boldness of the dying thief's request, it is not a little satisfactory to trace a connection between the incipient faith of this believer in the Redeemer of the world with the full-grown faith of the true Christian, who knows that to share the Cross is to have a title to the Crown, and that to partake of the sufferings of CHRIST is the sure road to the obtaining the everlasting joys of Heaven.

Meditation for S. Luke's Day.

S. LUKE was not chosen to be an Evangelist and Martyr from the ranks of the poor: he had learning, skill, and accomplishments, for he was a physician and a painter: by which we see how all states and conditions of life can be, and ought to be, sanctified to God's service, and that none need be a bar to holiness and *devotedness* of life.

In “Luke, the beloved physician,”¹ we see a type of the Heavenly Physician, and learn to honour our earthly ones, and to look on their ministrations as a type of the perpetual care and tender love which the Physician of Souls, the compassionate SAVIOUR of men, is ever showing and exercising towards our souls and bodies.

Let us remember that all useful and agreeable accomplishments are a “talent” and gift from God, which we are not at liberty to dedicate solely to our own amusements, far less to abuse, to any end injurious to ourselves or to others. We shall have to give account for the use to which we have put our accomplishments, as well as any other talents (such as fortune, influence, time, health, strength, &c.,) committed to us by God. Let us seek therefore as far as we can to consecrate them to the service of God, and to innocent purposes, by which our neighbours may be profited or edified. Let us consider what we read of S. Luke, 2 Tim. iv. 10, 11: “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world; only Luke is with me.” S. Luke abode steadfast in the faith of CHRIST, when difficulty and danger attended the doing so; and great self-denial was required, in which Demas failed. Thus we see that in his case a finished education

¹ Col. iv. 14.

and elegant pursuits had not softened and enervated his soul, making him unfit to bear the cross, as is unhappily the case with too many. Let us follow his example, and “in the evil day,”¹ when the cause of truth is evil spoken of, when the confession of what we conscientiously believe and hold to be true (being taught by the Word of God and by His Church) would expose us to ridicule or contempt in any degree, *then* let us see that we abide unmoved, even although many may be falling away from us, and we may perhaps feel solitary and forsaken. Let us be as “Luke,” still abiding constant when all others were gone: instead of following Demas in his desertion, because some fancied good of this present world is more dear to us than the truth and a good conscience.

A Comforting Thought.

Is it right to quote so frequently that text (though uttered by the wise man) as applied to Christians, that “no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them,”² to express that we cannot tell in what light we stand before our God and Heavenly FATHER, whether

¹ Ephes. vi. 18.

² Eccles. ix. 1.

we are pleasing or displeasing in His sight? A very dreary and discouraging thought! Now one rule for knowing whether we are, or are not, enjoying His love and favour, is given us in Scripture, our Blessed LORD's own mouth proclaiming it when He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."¹ Those, who endure chastisements then, are loved.

Drawbacks.

How trying are these to the young, and to the undisciplined mind, which is ever seeking in this poor fallen world for the counterpart to that ideal of happiness which we all bear within us! Vain search for what is only to be found in "the land which is very far off!"² How many disappointments we must undergo before we can resolve to give up looking for perfect satisfaction and contentment in things here below, and ere we can be thankful that all *is* so chequered with imperfection that we cannot (if we would) rest in it, so as to be in danger of wishing for nothing beyond! But the lesson *is* learnt at length, and we own,—though not too willingly,—that it is more blessed to be led

¹ Rev. iii. 19.

² Isa. xxxiii. 17.

from a constant sense of dissatisfaction (even amid what promises most fairly) to long and yearn for something holier, purer, more enduring, than to be betrayed into forgetfulness of a better world than this. And feeling thus, we pray for those most dear, that if the cross must follow close upon their steps, they may be spared too great a measure of earth's griefs, bereavements, separations, disappointments; that the sweet may overpower the bitter of their cup, and that they may be endowed with a full measure of God's grace to enable them to bear their cross cheerfully, courageously, unweariedly, till they come to confess in a riper age that the blessings have far outnumbered the trials in their lot.

On Compensations.

BUT these drawbacks which we are apt to resent so bitterly as though they were unwarrantable diminutions of our little sum of earthly joy, would lose much of their poignancy if we could bring ourselves to look on the events of life as they are, and not through a falsely coloured medium, if we would set against these drawbacks to our happiness, the alleviations to

our distresses, the softenings of our trials, which are also allotted. But there is in some of us a cowardly dread of the opinion of others, overpowering our own better feeling, and leading us to fear the imputation of insensibility, coldness, forgetfulness, shallowness of feeling, if we dwelt too much on the power of alleviating circumstances. Yet *these* are appointed and portioned out to us as much as the trials themselves, and by the same unerring Hand. What right have we then to overlook or reject them as unsuitable to our deeper feelings, and as impotent to afford relief to a great and legitimate grief? Were they unsuitable they would not be ordered for us by the all-wise Physician, the all-loving FATHER of our souls. Are they impotent? This is our own fault; and because we refuse to open our hearts to their benign and gentle influence. We have no right to look only on the fading and fallen flowers of the garden of life, when new and lovely ones are still blooming in it, and fresh ones are ever being supplied to renew its brightness! True, we might have chosen or preferred to keep the first which bloomed upon our trees, but the Planter of that garden has willed it otherwise, and shall we reply against Him?

Providential Guiding.

How strangely and ungraciously men speak ! they say, " L'homme propose, Dieu dispose," and the meaning which sometimes lurks under this saying is, that man orders things well for himself, and God orders otherwise for him ; that man proposes pleasant things for himself, and God sends him bitter ones. This looks very ill when written, but is there not some such feeling in the heart of many of us when we are disappointed as to some favourite schemes or much-cherished hopes ? Would it not be a more fitting view of the matter, and one more consonant with the filial attitude in which by Baptism we have been made to stand towards our FATHER Which is in heaven, to look on ourselves, as like one who is being led by a wise and loving Friend towards some point, from which he is to behold a glorious and enchanting prospect, and who has consented to be blindfolded for a time, and to be led without well knowing whither or by whom, in order that his joy and rapture when he beholds this promised vision may be enhanced by the surprise and contrast ? Does not such an one cling to his conductor with many a thrill of *hope and expectation*, and in full confidence

that he is being well and safely guided, though oftentimes the road may be rough and the way seem long and weary? Confiding in the wisdom and love of his long known and well trusted guide, he cannot doubt but that he will find himself fully repaid for all the toils and perils of the way, and that in the end his expectations will be more than fulfilled: believing this, he cares not that the way by which he is being led is unknown to him; and if for a while the covering should be partly removed from his eyes, so that he thinks he can find the way for himself, he soon discovers that he is being led in a direction which he would not choose for himself, less tempting and less in accordance with his wishes, yet this only makes him nestle closer under the mantle of his protector when the winds blow roughly or the darkening horizon threatens a storm. For the love he bears to his powerful and heaven-gifted friend, it is sweet to him to give himself up entirely to his guidance, and to become, as it were, a little child, with a child's confiding trust, and a child's joy and wonder.

Would not such a temper of mind be a safe and very happy one for each weak Christian pilgrim to adopt? We know Who has said,¹ "Except ye become as little children, ye shall

¹ S. Matth. xviii. 3.

not enter into the kingdom of heaven," &c.; "Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."¹

The Holy Angels.

Is it a loss to these blessed and, as we esteem them, highly favoured beings, that they cannot bear the Cross of their Lord and ours? even as Jeremy Taylor says concerning them, that they cannot die for and with Him as we can? If it be so, then is it partly revealed to us why they are ordained to minister to us suffering mortals, and to take part as it were in all our griefs and woes, for thus by sharing with us the burden of our crosses, they are made after a manner partakers of the cross of their and our dear Lord.

How great is our daily loss from our practical unbelief in all that concerns those blessed beings, of whom enough is told us to excite a theoretical belief, but not enough to make it easy for us to realize their constant but unseen presence and ministrations. Yet some, possessed with a livelier faith, have enjoyed the

¹ S. Mark x. 15.

comfort from which too many of us are precluded by our overtimid belief, and an habitual unmindfulness of spiritual realities. We read the testimony of one who says, that in times of disappointed affection when friends failed, the thought of his ever-present celestial Friend softened the anguish of his spirit, and restored peace to his heart; and who speaks of his guardian angel as the confidant of his secret sorrows in childhood, or the comforter of his bitter trials and sufferings in later years. To the poor it is sometimes given to realize more vividly the blessing of their presence; but whether as a compensation for their privation of earthly comforts, or because the partaking of the Cross clears the glass through which faith descries the things of the other world, I will not attempt to determine. May we not believe that the holy angels are frequently in the thoughts of the sick poor, from the frequency with which they use their name as a symbol of anything soothing and pleasing to them in the ministrations of pastor or sympathising visitor. How often may we hear such exclamations from them as, "When such a one came in it was as if an angel had come in to me;" or, "You have been as little angels to me;" or, (speaking of a priest,) "It seems to me when he comes to me just as if it was an angel of God."

On Receiving New Spiritual Benefits.

In the turmoil of excited emotions, of newly awakened hope, of gratitude, &c., which is apt to follow on the receipt of some great spiritual benefit, which had been long withheld and is now at length granted to us, there is often an under current of feeling which might be clothed in such language as the following : Why did not this come sooner? Why was it not earlier vouchsafed? Why have I been made to wait so long? And how shall these questionings, these almost upbraidings of Providence be answered unless it be by a further question, *viz.*, this, Are you worthy now? Could you claim it as a debt? Has any injustice been done you? Was it not God's to give or to withhold, and to be granted only when He saw fit? But a reason also may be assigned for such delays, and when the mind can be brought to review the matter calmly, it will see and own, that perhaps had the boon come earlier the receiver would have been found unready and unmeet to profit by it. Verily we must believe that our heavenly FATHER has not withheld any gifts from unwillingness to bestow them on His children, but only whilst they were unfit to have them, and would *not have known* how to use them to their own

profit. Yet we are slow really to believe this, and cannot readily be brought to acknowledge that it would not have been good for us sooner to possess this or that spiritual advantage, help, or privilege, or whatever may be advantageous to body or mind. How mysterious does it seem to a sick person that such and such a means of cure should not have been devised sooner, when it is successfully applied at last; and thus in numberless other cases. But there would be no end to such questionings of the Providence of God, and the best means of ending them is to show what an absurdity they would become if pushed to the utmost, for then we must ask, "why is any evil ever allowed to come near us, since all might be averted by the all-powerful Hand which controls every event?"

S. Luke vii. 37.

THIS passage has always been full of difficulty to me in spite of the many and excellent explanations of it I have met with. To-day a gleam of light dawned on my mind when reading it, which caused me to look at the incident recorded in a new point of view, by

laying the stress chiefly on a different part of our Blessed **LORD**'s discourse with the Pharisee from that which is generally chosen. It appeared to me that our **SAVIOUR**'s answer is especially directed to the unexpressed thought, which (we are told by the Evangelist) lurked in the heart of that proud and supercilious man, viz., that if He Whom he had bidden were a prophet (or more than an ordinary man) He would have known who and what manner of woman it was who had ventured to approach Him. This I infer from the tenor of our **LORD**'s subsequent discourse, in which, without betraying to His haughty entertainer that He had read his thought, and whilst seeming only to give him an opportunity for displaying sagacity and ripeness of judgment by his answer to the question put to him, our **LORD** did at length clearly manifest His perfect knowledge of what was in man, and His power to discern "the thoughts and intents of the heart"¹ of each one who approached Him. This He now does by declaring that the poor despised sinner "loved much," far more than the hospitable giver of the feast, who, He implied, "loved little." Next, after having thus disclosed His knowledge and justified His claim to the title of a prophet, He calmly assumes the power and authority of one

¹ Heb. iv. 12.

Who was indeed “more than a prophet”¹ by pronouncing to the woman the absolution of all her sins, without heeding the murmurings of the by-standers. Amongst these we do not find that Simon is mentioned, and are therefore left in doubt whether his silence proceeded from a humble, self-convicted spirit. As we read nothing to the contrary, and as our Blessed Lord’s gracious declaration to the woman does not appear to have been met by any outward expression of indignation from those who heard it, may we not charitably hope that the rebuke came home to Simon ?

On Daily Rising and Going to Rest.

How disposed we are to weary of this ever-recurring repetition of the same act, moreover of so uninteresting and tedious an act as that of dressing and putting off our garments. It really does seem as if we might have been spared such a very monotonous and fatiguing way of spending a great deal of valuable time and strength. We think if the days had been made longer, the preparing for the night would not have come round so very often, and some

¹ S. Matth. xi. 9.

time and trouble would have been saved. Of course such thoughts are both wrong and foolish, because whatever has been ordered for us is right, and we have only to submit to it: they are excusable only as are the groans of the sick and weary, or the rash speeches of the afflicted and desperate. However, it is more satisfactory to seek and to find a solution to a problem, than merely to say that it is insoluble. May not one be found in this case in the conclusion, that it is not simply expedient for our bodies that they should have rest just as often as they are made to take it, but that it is beneficial for our *souls* that we should be thus frequently reminded of the rest of the grave and the resurrection to a new life? A great saint has said, that one means of progressing in holiness is to begin life afresh every new day. How significant a hint of the value and real use of these frequent breaks and beginnings again in our lives; viz. to afford us the opportunity for commencing as it were a new life with each returning day. If we are tempted sometimes through indolence to think it a weariness to repeat every day the same duties and-service, which we have only just, as it seems to us, brought to a close at night; we are stirred up to look on this not as a *burden*, but a privilege; a boon, and not an

imposition ; a sacred duty, instead of only an inevitable necessity. And what a difference such a thought makes in all our feelings ! Henceforth we thankfully submit to be reminded night by night of our bodily and mental frailty and infirmity, needing these continual respite to thought and labour, and so have it thus impressed upon us that one day, the *last* of our lives here, will be followed by a longer *night*, even the long rest of the grave, to fit our bodies for the new day of the glorious resurrection, of which our awakening every morning is a type.

“They need not depart, give ye them to eat.”¹

How encouraging to the missionary bishop or priest, is this text ! They may take it to themselves when depressed by the sense of their own impotence to provide for the hungry and famished multitude of living souls around them ; without a church built with hands to invite them to, without the means for celebrating the Holy Sacraments and rites of the Church with becoming solemnity ; with nothing perhaps but

¹ S. Math. xiv. 16.

their own bodily presence, their feeble words and persuasion; scarcely, perhaps, the knowledge of the languages of those they would convert and instruct. How encouraging, then, is this miracle of our Blessed **Lord's**, and His words, "They need not depart, give ye them to eat." They doubting still, may say in their hearts, as the disciples of yore, "We have here but five loaves and two fishes,"¹ but nevertheless when the **Lord** has blessed these, and given them to them to distribute, the multitude will be satisfied; and even more than this, twelve baskets full of fragments shall remain, to prove the more than sufficiency of means which had appeared to their weak faith, *so* insufficient. And surely it was not without a peculiar significance that the exact number of twelve baskets full were collected, but to refer to the number of the Apostles who had distributed, and thus to point the more clearly the lesson intended to be conveyed.

S. Mark iv. 37—41.

How graphic is this description! The vessel so full of water as to be absolutely in danger,

¹ Verse 17.

though as yet probably the peril had not reached that portion of it in which our Blessed LORD lay asleep (asleep, that is, as regarded the body, for assuredly His heart watched, and beheld His perplexed disciples.) At length they are compelled to disturb Him in His sleep: but it seems difficult to ascertain whether they actually apprehended danger for Him, together with themselves, or for themselves alone. "Carest Thou not that we perish?" is their cry. Did some unbelief lurk in this question? Could they really think He was simply asleep, and so unconscious of the approaching disaster? or did they hereby intimate, that being safe Himself He was unmindful of the peril to them? or, trusting in His power to save, were they simply perplexed by His delaying so long to exercise it? Whatever their thoughts were, what a lively image does this scene present to us of the Church in the midst of the waves of persecution and distress, seemingly almost overwhelmed by her enemies, and tempted to doubt God's power or will to save her! Ah, is it not that she forgets that He is in the ship, and has promised to abide there with her to the end of time? It cannot therefore be that she is really in danger, whatever may appear: He knows her distress, but delays visibly to work her rescue: He waits till the last moment, till her

state seems almost desperate, to try her faith; but He is there counting each wave while He appears to sleep: each peril will be to the increase of His glory in the end. All have a purpose, all those trials are working for good to the mystical ship. There is in our Blessed Lord's answer something, it seems, of vehemence, corresponding with the querulousness of their adjuration, "Why are ye so fearful?" and yet the peril *was* apparently imminent: "how is it that ye have no faith?" The sense of His presence in the ship ought to have been sufficient in spite of appearances. What a lesson for us all!

S. Michael and All Angels.

WHAT shall I venture to say on such a day as this? It is too mysterious a theme for my weak pen. Of S. Michael I will not attempt to speak; I will only try and recall a thought which came to me on one of those happy and blessed anniversaries, as I was seeking to call to mind what had fallen from the lips of Canon — when preaching in the cathedral of Exeter on the nature, office, and employment of these holy beings, who seem so high

above us in their purity and in their celestial calling, that even to emulate them appears at first sight quite beyond the power given to man. But whilst I meditated thus, it was silently and sweetly breathed into my mind, that those special prerogatives were not so entirely above our reach; that to some among the children of men, it is conceded to live a life not wholly unlike that of the blessed angels, wonderful as this may at first sight appear. True it is only afar off, as it were, that any mortal can follow in their steps; the brightness of a reflected light *will* be pale and dim compared with that from which it is reflected; the echo will be a weak and imperfect repetition of the voice which is sent back to us. Yet it is no less true than consoling, that the lives of some among the fallen children of Eve may bear a resemblance to that of the holy angels, and partake of the special blessedness enjoyed by them. I speak of those who, either from choice or circumstances, are free from the closer and more engrossing ties and duties of life, who feel themselves therefore called to a more devoted life of prayer and intercession, who take delight in the exercise of the ministries of love and mercy, and from having fewer personal wants than their more burdened brethren and sisters in the Church have more to distribute,

so that they can enjoy the “blessedness of giving” in a larger measure. Free from the most exciting and passionate of this world’s joys and sorrows, those of their loved ones first, and then of all the brotherhood in CHRIST, become their own by adoption, and by the exercise of a quickened sympathy. The common occurrences of daily life are ever furnishing them with opportunities for ministering to those who with them “shall be heirs of salvation ;”¹ and many among the poor and the afflicted rise up to call them blessed ; nay, they already hear themselves saluted by the title of “good angels.” Yet for all this there may be nothing remarkable or singular in their lives : they need not be retired from among men, or differ outwardly from the ordinary manner of living of their fellow-creatures, whilst there is yet a resemblance clearly to be traced with the life and blessedness of the angels of God. It is a heart-ennobling thought, and one which should excite us to earnest endeavours after inward holiness and purity, as well as that real charity of the heart, and not only of the act, without which S. Paul tells us, it is of no avail to “give all our goods to feed the poor.”² It is a thought which sheds a brighter light on paths which otherwise might seem desert, and which must

¹ Heb. i. 14.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

sometimes feel lonely. But at such moments it is good to meditate on the blessed angels, and to remember that in studying to imitate their unselfish and devoted life we may, if we have a heart to do so, refresh ourselves in the same manner in which they renew their strength, viz. by praise and adoration, and by mutual love between themselves. And who that follows this out will fail to acknowledge that this life is an enviable one, and rather to be desired, instead of despising it as poor and barren of delight, to be endured only, but not chosen? However, each one has his own calling, and let us sum up with the words of a holy writer: "let Martha be active, but let her not control Mary; let Mary contemplate, but let her not despise Martha."

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."¹

If we kept these words more in mind than we are apt to do, when reading the Old Testament Scriptures, (for it is of them alone that

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

the Apostle speaks here,) we should not be tempted, as we sometimes are, to consider that the portions of Scripture, appointed by the Church for our daily reading, are not always a very profitable or very interesting study. I believe the reason of our thinking this to be, that we too often read the Word of God as we do other books for information rather than for edification and other devotional purposes; and doing so, it is only a wonder that the continual repetition of the historical portions of the Bible does not prove more wearisome to us; but the fault lies not in the judgment of our wise and holy Mother the Church, who has enjoined upon us the study of the Old as well as of the New Testament daily, but in our mistaken manner of applying what we read. Did we duly remember the real purpose with which these inspired records were given to us, as stated by S. Paul, "as profitable for doctrine," &c., we should find that they have an interest ever new, according to the various circumstances under which, and the different feelings with which, we peruse them day by day, and the manifold practical applications of which they are capable suitably with our ever varying needs. For instance, in some time of public anxiety and alarm, when either the State or *the Church* appears to stand in jeopardy and

likely to be overwhelmed, how reviving to our drooping faith is it to come upon some passage (as it were by chance) descriptive of the mighty and unlooked for deliverance of God's people of old,—such as the destruction of Sennacherib's army, or that of the Egyptian host. These well-known histories then assume the new aspect of a message to ourselves inspiring hope and renewing our confidence in that Almighty arm, which never wearied of helping His people, albeit it is often stretched out to chasten them "for their profit, and that they may be partakers of His holiness."¹ We are all in the habit of applying the Psalms in our monthly repetition of them to our personal comfort and edification; and with regard to the New Testament, we are accustomed to seek in the portions allotted for our daily reading for some verses especially applicable to our actual want in the way of comfort or instruction. Why do we not treat the Old Testament lessons in the same manner, especially as we have the authority of an inspired Apostle for so doing? Thus we shall restore them to that high place of honour and esteem, in which they deserve to be enshrined by all to whom they have graciously been given, and we shall set our seal to the truth of S. Paul's words, that

¹ Heb. xii. 10.

the Holy Scriptures (of the Old Testament)
“are able to make us wise unto salvation,
through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.”¹

A Fragment.

We are wont to be solicitous about the well-being of those we love, the young especially; but are we right in being as anxious as we are? True, they have powerful and subtle enemies, “the world, the flesh, and the devil;” but are there not more with them than against them? Does not the inspired Word itself teach us to sum up the helps we have as Christians, when it tells us through S. Paul, that we are come to “God the Judge of all,” (let us add, to our Heavenly FATHER,) “to JESUS the Mediator of the New Covenant,” (our LORD and SAVIOUR, our Friend and Brother,) “to the blood of sprinkling,” (His precious Blood which cleanseth from all sin,) “to an innumerable company of angels,” (our guardians and heavenly helpers,) “to the church of the first-born which are written in heaven,” (the patriarchs, elders, and fathers of the Church, may we not imagine?) “and to the spirits of just men made

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

perfect,"¹ (amongst whom we thankfully number our own faithful departed.) What comfort, and what support there is in these considerations ! Surely there are more with us, and with those for whom we are anxious, than there are against them ; why then do we fear ? Why ? truly because we look only on the rough sea, and listen to its roaring waves, and do not fix our eyes on the **LORD**, Who is walking thereon with our beloved ones, and Who is ever ready to stretch out His hand to save them when in danger of sinking.

Thoughts suggested by reading the
97th Psalm and 1 S. Peter v. 7.

"THE **LORD** reigneth ;" not will reign, but does reign, even now, when (as it would often seem,) evil men, or evil spirits reign, and when oftentimes confusion.

Yes, now, the **LORD** reigneth in fact, but clouds and darkness are round about Him. His ways are darkness to us, His doings are not understood by us ; still, as the Psalmist proceeds to say, " Righteousness and judgment are the habitation (or as the marginal reading

¹ Heb. xii. 23, 24.

gives it, the establishment,) of His throne." What comfort there is in this thought, and how readily may we join in the language of the remainder of the Psalm, rejoicing in the Lord, and giving thanks at the remembrance of His holiness!

"Casting all your care upon Him, for
He careth for you."

How little we realize and take to ourselves the whole comfort contained in this exhortation. We bring our cares to God, perhaps, but that is the most which we do; we do not leave them there. But suppose one of us to be labouring under a heavy load, and that some good Samaritan (as we should be disposed to call him) insisted on bearing the burden himself to ease us of what was too heavy for our strength, we should feel thankful to be wholly, not only partially, relieved from it. And so it is as to the Good Samaritan who bids us "cast all our load of care upon Him," because He is willing to bear it, "for He careth for us." But we will not accept His gracious offer; we insist (as it were) on discharging

¹ 1 S. Pet. v. 7.

ourselves of a measure only of our anxieties, and retaining still a large portion, and therefore we are not really eased, and prayer fails to give that perfect rest, which it should and would give if we made it indeed the means of "casting all our care" upon God.

"Perfect Love casteth out Fear."¹

WE are too apt to understand this of love to God only, but may it not refer as much, or more, to love of our brethren, which is so much insisted on in this epistle, and concerning which it appears to be intimated that if we possessed it in a high degree, we should have perfect confidence towards God, with the assurance of our prayers being always heard, and great boldness in the day of Judgment, because of our conscience testifying on our behalf, that we had through fervent charity attained to some resemblance of our Divine LORD. Let any one read the Epistle through and see whether this impression be conveyed to them. Of course, love to our brother must be inseparably connected with and inspired by love to God in the first place.

¹ 1 S. John iv. 18.

“Nay, much more those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary.”¹

WHAT comfort there is in these words for the sick, the weak, the apparently useless (as they seem to themselves,) in this world. Surely this sentence in Holy Writ was intended for them expressly. For does it not fit in exactly with their case? what does it seem to say? That the feeble members are—not only bearable instead of being useless or burdensome, but that they are necessary, indispensable to the well-being, perfectness, and compactness of the whole body, which would lack something, and be imperfect as a body without them. To whom then are these necessary? To themselves and to others it must be supposed. To themselves, because their feebleness and infirmities, sufferings, and trials are their appointed probation for eternal life; to others, because these very things may be made profitable in diverse ways to them also. Miss Maurice (herself so great a sufferer,) insists much on this very consoling thought, viz., that a sick member of a family may be a great blessing in it, and should not therefore look upon itself merely as a burden, a trouble, or a useless member. Does

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 22.

not the Apostle proceed to say shortly after, that He hath “given more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another, and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it ?”¹

S. Luke's Day.

We are much more accustomed to have S. Luke brought before us in his character of Evangelist, as the companion and faithful follower of S. Paul in his travels, than as a physician (which Ecclesiastical history asserts,) and painter, (which tradition tells us he also was;) yet the latter remembrance must be full of interest and of comfort to those who follow similar professions, as also to such as love and cultivate the arts in any degree. The lesson to be conveyed, viz., the duty of sanctifying all gifts and accomplishments that we may possess, is not one to be lightly passed over; however, I will do no more than hint at this to-day.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 24—26.

We are told that S. Luke painted the likeness of the Blessed Virgin. How we envy him, how we long and vainly yearn for a sight of that most precious picture, which would set to rest all doubts as to the exact lineaments of that Blessed One, whom so many painters have striven to pourtray, but to whom, after all, each could only give the form and features, most saintly and beautiful in his own eyes. How high a privilege was bestowed on S. Luke to paint from the original, truly one conceded to no other. And yet we should be mistaken if we imagined we were precluded from all share in what we envy; it is not on canvas, but on the "fleshy tables of the heart,"¹ that we must all strive to imprint that likeness; and how may this be done? With what colours must we paint so fair and peerless an image? First, we must lay in the shades with the tint of humility; over this must be spread the fair hue of purity, dark shades must be put in of earnestness of soul, and deep thoughtfulness, and we must add, lastly, the bright colours of love, joy, peace, even all the "fruits of the Spirit." And are we not all of us, as Christians, bound to cultivate these fruits, and to set before our minds the bright examples of those who have served, or are serving God, or their fellow-crea-

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 3.

tures, by a devout life and ardent charity? Let us each go and do likewise after our measure, and then we may hope to have fulfilled in us that blessed promise, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."¹

Psalm xix. 4, 5.

"IN them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant."

The first image under which CHRIST the true Sun of Righteousness is here represented to us by the Psalmist is one, than which no other could have been found more strongly to express the intensity of love, with which our Blessed LORD and SAVIOUR regards the whole Church and each soul redeemed and purchased to Himself by His own most precious Blood; for at what moment can we suppose a man so near the realization of a perfect felicity as that in which as a bridegroom he commences life anew, no longer alone, but united by the closest bonds with the bride of his choice, whom he has taken to his heart and to his home to be his for ever? And thus, as we are taught to be-

¹ S. John xiii. 17.

lieve, does the Bridegroom of our souls go forth daily as it were to take to Himself anew His Bride the Church, by whom, as S. Paul tells us, we have been apprehended (or taken hold of) ever since we were (at our Baptism) first united to Him and firmly joined together, so as to be very members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones, one with Him and He with us.¹ The second figure under which CHRIST the Sun of Righteousness is represented to us in the Psalm above quoted is one which many of us have perhaps dwelt on with less pleasure than the first, viz., that of a giant or strong man, the notion of mere bodily vigour failing to impress us with any very elevated ideas. Let us remember, however, that strength when combined with gentleness presents a character uniting all that is most noble, lovely, and apt to engage the affections and the minds of men. This we have seen instanced in the days of chivalry, when heroes appeared upon the stage of life. We shall find throughout Scripture that CHRIST is foretold and described in terms which express the union of invincible strength with infinite gentleness. To quote passages of Isaiah would be to transcribe large portions of these sacred books; let us refer to a few only. Isaiah pourtrays Him as "He that cometh

¹ Ephes. v. 30.

from Edoth travelling in the greatness of His strength," &c.,¹ and speaking thus, "Surely they are My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Saviour: in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His Presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."² Elsewhere Isaiah says of Him that "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench."³ And how beautifully is the union of power and mercy delineated in such a passage as the following, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me."⁴ And in that well-known one, "The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek, He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God."⁵ What a consolation for us to reflect that we have in this glorious champion of our souls a heavenly Friend, Who is perfect in strength as well as in love and

¹ Isa. lxiii. 1.

² Isa. ixiii. 8, 9.

³ Isa. xlvi. 2, 3.

⁴ Isa. xxvii. 5.

⁵ Isa. lii. 1, 2.

sympathy; Who can accomplish all He wills, Who is never wearied by repeated appeals to His compassion for help. Never can He fail us through lack of power or strength, as is the case with those whom we would fain make our prop or stay on earth, of whom it may be said that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,"¹ so that our very comfort and satisfaction in seeking aid or solace from human sympathy is marred, or at least diminished by the consciousness that we are in danger of overtaxing the powers of our friends, or of building too much upon their sympathy. There would be no fear of our doing this were our earthly friends giants in strength of body, mind, and intellect, and abounding as much in the power to help, as they sometimes are in love and willingness to aid us in our need. Let us then take comfort from the remembrance and ever-present consciousness, that our Almighty and All-loving Friend calls especially unto Himself the weary and heavy laden, that they may cast all their care upon Him, and lean with all their weight on His almighty aid, relying on His promise to give them rest, if only they will learn of Him, Who is "meek and lowly in heart."

¹ S. Matth. xxvi. 41.

On Realizing Facts.

It has been averred concerning doctrines, that we cannot be said truly to realize a point of faith, till we have made it so completely our own as to go on from it to something else. The truth of this assertion may be proved by analogy. Who among us does not know the difficulty of realizing the truth of any important event, the tidings of which reach us? We hear them and fully believe them, they affect us, perhaps strongly, but we go our way, and by-and-by the usual and daily subjects of interest regain the upper hand over us, and the new and greater event, when it recurs to our mind, seems almost a dream. Then only may we be said to realize a matter, when we find ourselves viewing everything through the hue, dark or bright, cast by it; or rearranging in our minds each event of our coming life, its actions, purposes, plans, schemes for occupation, &c., as though they had all been displaced by the arrival of a new claimant on our time, thoughts, and interests; even as in childhood and youth we rearranged our treasures on the acquisition of some new and precious thing, the gift of a father or a friend; or as we see the rippling on a smooth watery surface, betokening some late

disturbance caused by the falling of a pebble or a leaf therein.

The Denial of S. Peter.

“BUT he denied before them all.”¹

The devout awe and horror with which we read the account in the Gospels of S. Peter’s threefold denial of his beloved and Divine Master is very natural and right, provided we do not proceed to wonder at it, and inwardly to judge the apostle severely, thinking that even as there was only one out of eleven disciples who was found to deny his Master, so in like manner there can be but few amongst professing Christians now to be found, whose conduct on trying occasions would bear a resemblance to that of S. Peter. We are apt to imagine that we could not possibly be numbered amongst those unhappy few, or be guilty of such ingratitude towards our Divine Master and Friend. Because we cannot, even in imagination, place ourselves in exactly the same circumstances, which were the occasion of this great apostle’s fall, therefore we vainly in our self-flattery imagine, that we should have evinced greater constancy and fortitude than he did. But let

¹ S. Matth. xxvi. 70.

us seek for a test nearer at hand, something which we can realize and bring home to our own hearts. Let us ask ourselves how we bear up against the trials which at times assail our faith concerning the power or wisdom of God in the dealings of His Providence or His care of us, with which the changing events of life abundantly furnish us.

For instance, when sources of anxiety multiply around us, and our horizon begins to darken ; when evils threaten and joy seems flying before us to give place to sorrow ; when friends have no sufficient arguments left wherewith to cheer our drooping spirits, but help to increase our depression by adding their gloomy forebodings to our own : when it seems almost unreasonable to look for help, or still to cling to hope and brighter anticipations, because such a view of things is deemed by all around us to be visionary and enthusiastic ; when it would require some moral courage to persist in hoping against hope from some remaining conviction that it is right to do so, although it makes us singular, and exposes us to the ridicule of others. Then, (and in many other far more fiery ordeals which may come upon us) will our faith stand firm ? may it not rather be found weak, or forsake us for a time, as even S. Peter's did, when exposed to so great a trial ? But one look from his

forbearing and gentle Master was sufficient to restore his faith, bringing over his spirit a tide of self-upbraiding, which would probably have overwhelmed him utterly had not his compassionate **Lord** previously prayed for him that his faith should not fail. And what must we do in order to recover or strengthen our faith when it is languishing? We must turn to our **Lord** in prayer, that He may turn and look upon us; then will our consciences upbraid us bitterly for our ingratitude and want of trust in One, Who has hitherto shown His power and His love in helping us, and bringing us out of many sorrows, so that we may each say with the Psalmist, “O what great troubles and adversities hast Thou showed me! and yet didst Thou turn and refresh me: yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again.”¹ Once more it is brought to our remembrance that “the **Lord’s** Hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His Ear heavy that it cannot hear”² our cry for help or comfort, yea, each agonised petition. With S. Peter we may weep over our temporary denial of our **Lord**, but it is not really “well” with us until we can also say, “The **Lord** is risen” (again in our hearts,) “and hath appeared” to us, as He did “to Simon,” with signs of reconciliation and

¹ Ps. lxxi. 18, Prayer Book Version.

² Isa. lix. 1.

pardoning love. Moreover, let us call to mind the injunction laid upon the Apostle, " And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."¹

New Scenes.

WHEN we find ourselves in a new and charming locality, surrounded by a lovely panorama, the heavens all sunshine and clearness, with little of the news of the outer world coming near to disturb our tranquillity, (for a while at least,) do we not seem to be almost transported out of this world ? Is it not a blessed respite, a foretaste of the rest beyond it ? But at such times a thought will arise, " This cannot long continue ; it is this world still, though very calm and serene ; but the time of storms will come in the moral world ; and what will be the first to cloud the sunshine and ruffle this present calm ?" True ; the storm must come, and thereby another question is answered, which had arisen before : " Why have I so many blessings ? why is my lot so favoured beyond that of others, almost too much so perhaps for the world ?" No ; not too much ; for these blessings are bound up in the same lot with many

¹ S. Luke xxii. 32.

drawbacks to their full enjoyment; or with many trials which tempt us to murmur and sometimes to deem this world too miserable, and our share in the burden of the cross too heavy. Thus, then, all is found to be right, and our lot is neither overbright, nor over-dark; our cross is, in truth, neither too heavy nor too light; it is just what God sees to be best fitted for us individually. And is it not "well" for us that we have not the choosing of our lot? we should not venture to choose it all bright; we could not bear to choose it all dark. We, therefore, thankfully acquiesce in the wisdom and goodness of our merciful SAVIOUR in taking out of our hands the power to choose, and laying upon us a cross chosen by Himself for us to bear for Him, one, perchance, which makes no show or noise in the world, but which if used aright, may furnish us with a straight and safe course to the heavenly Jerusalem. Whether it will be a short or a long way is laid up with Him who knoweth all things; at the longest, it cannot be very long, and if it be unlawful to wish it to be shortened, (nay, it is even a duty, for the sake of others, to strive to prolong it by using remedies for the preservation of life,) what length of time can appear too great? what burden be too hard to bear with such visions of Paradise as are offered to

our faith and hope, to our longings and expectations ?

We say and feel this, when we consider seriously ; and yet, we are apt to repine again, at the first little cross which we are called upon to bear. Oh, weak, unreasonable, and ungrateful heart of man ! when will you be healed, and see and feel aright, not only by fits and starts, not only whilst kneeling at the altar, but when put to the proof by sufferings either of body or mind ? With God all things are possible ; be this our ground of hope.

The English Service at Geneva.

THOSE, who most esteem our English Church Services, hardly know how much reason they have for valuing them, as faithfully embodying the great Catholic verities of the Christian religion, until they have joined in them at Geneva. There is something very refreshing in the midst of that focus of Socinianism, in hearing the glorious truth of our Divine LORD's equality with the FATHER enunciated over and over again as it is in the course of our services, whether in the Doxology, the time-honoured Creeds, in the quotations from Scripture, in the

hymns of the Primitive Church (such as the Te Deum,) in the prayers, in every part in short. We have no idea till we have used those offices at Geneva, how the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord runs through the whole, and is the very essence and spirit of it. *There* do we learn to appreciate what we ordinarily take too much as a matter of course, namely, a sound and perfect belief as regards the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is with an inward shudder at the thought of the contrast between this and the Socinian doctrines taught in so many of the churches in that ancient city, that we hug our own blessing of a sound liturgy.

Festa Days in Italy.

PERHAPS there is nothing which strikes the English traveller in Italy more than the "Festa" Days of the Church, as they are observed there by the people. After having kept these festivals in our own land privately, as it were, in a corner, nay more, in spite of obloquy and opposition in some quarters, and without a hope of seeing them recognised and shared by the busy or the poorer portions of the community, it is very startling in a city like Florence, at one of the

greatest public buildings, to be told that there is no admittance, because it is "Mezza Festa," S. Simon and S. Jude. This might have struck one less, had it been on one of the more prominent Feast Days of the Church; but on this one, to which it is more difficult to attach a marked character of its own, from the paucity of facts connected with those two holy Apostles which have come down to our day, the effect was to make one realize the existence of Saints' Days as one never had done before.

Then, there is something so new to us English people, in seeing the working classes making a duty of keeping Festa, of being joyful, of taking pleasure, and laying aside their work and their working dress in the week. It helps to impress on our mind, that the Master we all serve is indeed a merciful LORD, and not a hard task-master; and the effect on the spirits is very cheering and exhilarating, compared with that produced by the spectacle of unceasing labour, save on the gravely observed Sunday in England, and the few *fête* days *now* observed generally on week-days in France.

Guardian Angels.

STRANGE as it may seem, it is perhaps the case, that we believe great truths, while we withhold credence from lesser ones. For instance, it is so difficult to realize the fact of a heavenly guardian having been really allotted to each one of *us*, who are baptized members of CHRIST's Church, that we can scarcely be said to believe in it. Meanwhile, we *do* believe, though of course we only *partially* realize the fact of the indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT in us, ever since we were regenerate, and grafted into the Body of CHRIST's Church at holy Baptism. We can do no less than this, unless we disbelieve the express words of S. Paul, who tells us that "if any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is none of His."¹ Nay, more, if the HOLY SPIRIT be in us, then are we tabernacles of the Holy Trinity Itself, for where One of the Three Holy Persons is, there are all the Persons of the Blessed Trinity; and our blessed LORD Himself said, of those who should believe in Him, and obey His commandments, "My FATHER will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him,"² or as it is said elsewhere, "in Him

¹ Rom. viii. 9.

S. John xiv. 23.

we live, and move, and have our being.”¹ If we have faith in all this, may it not justly be said, that we hold the greater things which appertain to our salvation, while we refuse credence to those of less import, such as the existence of Guardian Angels? Yet how consoling is the thought, that a spiritual and heavenly being, free from sin, and full of love to God and man, should have been, so to say, attached to our existence and made inseparable from it, so that he should be, as it were, a second and purer self, and one whose continual appearance in the Presence of God (according to his prerogative,) may serve ever to keep us in His remembrance, and to maintain our claim to be numbered amongst the inhabitants of the “ Jerusalem which is above,”² and who may also be our faithful and constant guide and guardian, while we fulfil our appointed lot on earth.

A Thought for All Saints’ Day.

As we endeavour on this day to call to mind the names of those who have preceded us to “the silent land,” out of the number of those given to us to know and love here below, how

¹ *Acts xvii. 28.*

² *Gal. iv. 28.*

amazing it appears to the feeble, or sick, to find themselves still remaining here, while so many have been called away from their side, who appeared far more likely to weather out the storms of life, than themselves. We see some, perchance, whose existence, like a fading leaf in autumn, hangs on so slight a thread, that each blast might cause it to fall, yet remaining on the parent tree, whilst multitudes fall around them on every side. Why is this? Does not the very fact preach to us in the loudest and clearest tones, that the times and seasons are in the Hand of God, and that He numbers the days of each; that His ways are in the great waters, and not to be searched out by us? Yet it does seem strange to our imperfect vision, that while many are taken away in the midst of their career of usefulness and active service, other comparatively useless or insignificant lives should be prolonged. Very mysterious likewise is it, that some have been spared in infancy, only as it appears to us, to sin and to suffer! Among such, I will instance that well-known author, loved by many of us, Silvio Pellico. Sickly and suffering from childhood, he was recalled to life when at the point of death, by the reception of his first Communion, privately administered. Restored to the world and its *dangers*, he was tempted by the sophistry of

evil companions, to become a sceptic and to fall away from the faith of his early days. From the dreadful sin of infidelity, he was saved by long years of captivity, comprising the most fearful mental and bodily sufferings, from which he returned a wiser indeed, but a far sadder man, and with shattered health and nerves, a mere wreck of humanity. He floated yet some time before the eyes of his fellow-voyagers, on the dangerous ocean of life, to be as a beacon to warn, and a light to cheer them on their way. He even outlived most of the members of his family, and lingered on, wondering himself, that any one could suffer so much and yet live! Truly of him it may be thought, that he was born only to suffer, and we are tempted to wonder why he was not allowed to depart, ere he had erred, so as to need, and to draw down upon himself, such awful and severe chastisements? But it is not the tone of his own writings, that suggests this question. On the contrary, as we read his "Letters," we feel sure that he would not have wished to have been spared all he went through; for if he lived to suffer, he lived also to repent, to know and love more perfectly God and his fellow-men: and in that love, as practised by himself, and reciprocated by the wise and good, he found a sweetness and a peace not of this

world. Indeed we might all be tempted to envy his frame of mind, so full of true piety and thankfulness, as well as moderation towards those who differed from him, and of forgiveness of his enemies. But could we pay the cost? These graces were the fruit of those ten years of sufferings, such as we shudder to think of, yet for his own sake, we dare not wish that they had been expunged from the history of his life.

Extract and Remarks—Conformity to the Will of God.

We read in S. François de Sales these remarks: "Resignation is shown by struggles to submit our own wills and choices to those of God; pious indifference is higher than resignation, caring for nothing except it is the will of God. These both look to the will of God, but the former looks with effort, the latter without effort. But simple desire is superior to either, for it inclines us beforehand to what God wills, without knowing what that will may be."

I suppose the impression conveyed to most by this passage would be what it was to me at

first reading, namely, that the last-mentioned grace was indeed well-nigh unattainable by most of us; so much seems to be between us and that height of conformity with the will of GOD: even the lowest scale of ascent is difficult to us all; the second few of us have probably ever attained to; and the third appears positively like the summit of Mont Blanc for altitude! But on further consideration, it appears that there may be a better way of viewing the matter, and an easier mode of attaining that height than the usual one of climbing up the slow and tedious ascent by the lower ridge of resignation, and the slippery ledge of indifference, on which there is little hold for the footing of man. I would propose taking the pinions of the eagle, as it were, and mounting at once on the wings of faith and love to the summit itself of union with, and waiting on the will of our heavenly FATHER and Divine SAVIOUR. From that height how far off would those appear to us who were toiling up the beaten track! We should see them oft sliding back, or beaten down by any strong breeze of trial and temptation, and how should we long to call to them, and tell them to try this more direct way of gaining the desired end. Meanwhile what a clear view we should be enjoying, what a profound calm and stillness, what per-

fect satisfaction: not a desire ungratified, it would be the heaven of the soul!

And is this as impossible to grace as it is in nature? Because the body must first learn to walk, nay, even to crawl before it can run, must it be necessary for the soul to ascend by the slowest and most gradual steps, in order to reach the heights of virtue which are set before us as our goal, in order to enter the abodes of true peace and joy? May it not be best in some cases to make the most difficult our first aim? A citadel, for instance, is often taken better by a *coup de main* than by a protracted siege, especially if the position be a very inaccessible one, and the approach to it very arduous. Nay, there are some so guarded, that by no gradual approaches could they ever be overcome, and this exalted virtue of conformity with the will of God seems to me to be one of these. How few comparatively have scaled that fortress! Why? Because they attempt to reach it by the lower and winding paths, which after promising fair at first fail them after awhile, leaving them at the foot of the steepest ascent.

But my theory may sound too bold in the ears of many, or may be deemed wholly impracticable. Let us see if there is no way of giving it a different and more familiar aspect.

We all know what it is for any one to be said to have no will of their own, being as it were absorbed, and having well-nigh merged his or her individuality in that of some loved and superior being. This may be a weakness when carried to excess, but it would be much more beautiful to behold a Christian thus wholly merging his will, choices, likings and inclinations in those of an all-mighty, all-wise, and all-loving God and SAVIOUR. And why should this be deemed impossible, or even difficult? If one frail being can so lean and love to lean on another as to have no will till he has ascertained that of the beloved object, why should not an enlightened faith and kindled love enable the Christian so to trust in the wisdom and love of his heavenly FATHER and of his beloved SAVIOUR, Friend, and Benefactor, as to find it possible, nay desirable, to suspend his choice and will until he has gained by prayer and secret communion with his God the knowledge of His will and choice concerning him in all cases which call forth the exercise of the will of man? What ineffable peace would be the result! This summit may be hard to reach, even by the boldest flight, but it would be worth the straining of every power and faculty once to gain it, the reward would be what must be seen to be comprehended; no one could de-

scribe to others the view enjoyed from that mountain-height of all the works and ways of God.

Effects of **Holy Communion.**

S. FRANCOIS de Sales thus speaks : " An experience of twenty-five years' ministering to souls has taught me the powerful virtue of this Blessed Sacrament in strengthening hearts in goodness, in cleansing them from sin, in comforting them ; in a word, in transfiguring them to a heavenly likeness even in this world, provided it be received with the needful faith, purity, and devotion." Here is a testimony of which the sincerity cannot be questioned. I will add another in the words of a living author, which is of a different and very painful nature, but is useful also as tending to strengthen our faith in the power and efficacy of this Sacrament, which cannot surely be supposed to be less powerful for good, if rightly received, than for evil when awfully abused to an evil purpose. We read that a French infidel, whom, however, God had not yet abandoned, and who had not as yet quenched His HOLY SPIRIT, once asked a more experienced, hardened, hoary infidel, how he could get rid of the torments of

his conscience. "Receive the Sacrament," was his answer, "and you will never be troubled more." It was done, and was found true; the HOLY SPIRIT, Whose voice he by this profaneness sought to quench, spoke to his soul no more.

This fact is almost too awful to write or to dwell on, but perhaps the danger in these days is to think too little of the virtue and efficacy of the Blessed Sacrament, and it is well therefore if in any way these are impressed upon us. Let us, however, turn from this terrible view of the subject to the soothing and encouraging one presented by our good Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and pray with him "that we may receive this Sacrament as the earnest of an eternal inheritance, as a defensative against all spiritual danger, for the eviction of all the powers of the enemy, as an incentive of holy love, and a strengthening of our faith, for the increasing of a holy hope, and the commemoration of a heavenly love."

On Frequent Communion.

It is common for writers to compare grace and the heart that receives it to rain descend-

ing from heaven, and the earth on which it falls, and it is the usual mode of expression to intimate that the driest and most parched land will receive the precious boon of moisture with the greatest avidity and readiness. But is not this a mistake? A mistake as regards both the parable and the interpretation of it. Ground is hardened by a long drought, is in fact unprepared for imbibing moisture, which rolls off its polished surface in the first instance, and makes but little impression. Is not rather the soil already softened, and broken down, and mellowed by frequently repeated showers "sent in due season," that which best receives a new supply of the fertilising moisture, and shows itself the most grateful by yielding a plentiful return? And is it not thus also as regards the spiritual soil of the human heart? Who that knows anything of his own heart but must feel aware that it is not after a long dearth of spiritual sustenance, that he receives it with the greatest desire and avidity, or with the greatest profit and advantage to his soul's health? No; the heart long left without the showers of Divine grace as bestowed through Sacraments often becomes more and more indifferent about them, and is like the parched baked earth, hard and insensible at first to the reception of them. At all events, if it receives

them, it does so with less profit when thus rarely entertained, for the spiritual soul has not been kept in that state of preparedness which frequent Communion can alone bestow. And how should it be otherwise, since we cannot suppose that any can so well prepare the heart for God as He can Himself? What lengthy preparation invented and wrought out by man can equal the efficacy of His own sanctifying presence in the soul? Therefore it is that frequent Communions tend to give confidence for again and again approaching the Sacred Altar. "Holy things for holy persons," was the watchword of the primitive Church. We can never esteem ourselves to be truly meet for and deserving of such a Divine gift: but if this can ever be, it must be when recent union with Himself has imparted to us something of His own holiness. Infrequent Communions are mostly full of misgiving and fear; and why so? but because we know we can of ourselves do nothing to make us worthy to draw near to such Divine and Heavenly things. No; He Who calls, must also prepare us to come; He Who provides the Feast must also furnish the wedding garment, and that Robe is nothing else but Himself! Are we not enjoined by the Apostle to "put on the LORD JESUS CHRIST,"¹

¹ Rom. xiii. 14.

and with this robe we may surely best present ourselves to kneel before His Table.

If grace is likened to the gentle and silent influence of dew, may not the Sacraments be compared to that "unique" and remarkable fall of water, the Staubach, which, while it flows down in a beautiful stream, does so almost without noise, presenting thus a perfect image of refreshment and delight without any admixture of the awful and disturbing?

(Written a few days later.)

I erred when I compared the Sacraments to the Fall of the Staubach, before I had become personally acquainted with the character of this cascade. Yet the very name "*Fall of Dust*," should have made me hesitate, ere I compared it with the real and most substantial blessing and benefit of the Divine grace and Sacraments. In truth, this fall is no abundant or beautiful stream. It is a delusion of the eye, and when you draw near, you behold a very feeble (though perennial) stream descending the rock, which almost vanishes from your sight when you have gone a little further. No, this is no fit emblem of God's best gifts, the Blessed Sacraments, nor is a silent fall, perhaps, the truest image of them, for His spiritual gifts [REDACTED] as full of awe as they are of blessedness, and

the two cannot be wholly separated, and must ever attach to them, while we remain in our frail bodies, and are burdened by our most imperfect nature.

Sounds and Associations.

THAT sounds recall associations is so old and common a remark that it would not be worth making, were it not, that we each of us feel the truth of it so keenly for ourselves, that it appears to us new and original. And what sound perhaps, (at least so it seems to me,) has the power of recalling the past more vividly, than the lowing of cattle at a distance; speaking to some of us of quiet scenes in youth, when life seemed to lie stretched out before us as a long vista; when days, and months, and years, had something of substance and abiding in them; when there appeared to be time for schemes and undertakings of some length; when all things had not as yet begun to fly before us like a fleet shadow, and our life was not (as it became in after years,) spent for us rather than by us, through events and circumstances in part beyond our own control? Yes; such sounds as these, "come floating over the heart

like the soft breath of the autumnal gale," whisper soothingly the hope, that something may be restored to us of what has been lost in earlier years; that the precious gifts of time and power, and opportunity, may yet be granted us in calmer age, for self-culture, self-improvement, and some work which will not be without profit to our fellow-creatures.

New Year's Day.

WE wish our friends "a happy new year." What do we mean by this? That the coming months should be as full as may be of pleasant events, with health and strength granted to do and to enjoy, and with as few intervals as possible of wearisome inactivity, of dulness, or of forced repose. I speak not now concerning more real trials and misfortunes, which as a matter of course are excluded from our thoughts, when we frame wishes for those we love. This is all very natural, and I say not that it were well to include crosses and mishaps in these our wishes for them, since their heavenly FATHER alone knows how much of these is good and needful for each of His children: but is it not *perhaps* true that we err in desiring for them

an unbroken span of activity, of pleasant distractions, of interesting events and occupations, thus filling up all their time, and leaving little space, if for weariness, so likewise for recollection and reflection? May not men be too busy, too fully occupied, even though their labour be "in the Lord" and "for the Lord," in His vineyard and in His house, nay, even in some way ministering to Him in His poor? Is it as good for us as it is pleasant to have a multitude of innocent and agreeable distractions and pursuits, filling up all our hours, and occupying and engrossing most of our thoughts? All these things may be, and doubtless are, "good gifts," but they are likely, when possessed in a very full measure, to be so at the expense of higher and better ones still; and therefore I venture to question the wisdom of invoking exclusively such blessings as these upon the heads of those we love. It is an unquestionable truth, a law of God's kingdom, that we may not and cannot have all things at once to hold and to enjoy. If we would attain to the highest and best things we must be content to let go some of the less good. While we are in the enjoyment of all that makes time speed away pleasantly, and have our heart's desire here below, we shall be less likely to raise our minds to the thought of another and

a better state; we shall know little of the blessedness of looking on to the joys of the life to come. Moreover the hope and expectation of entering into its felicities will form but a very small portion of our happiness in this life. And whilst it is thus with us must not our loss be great, whatever amount of earthly happiness and contentment may have been granted us as our lot? Let us not then deem those whose portion comprehends many blank days to be necessarily objects of our pity and compassion. They may undoubtedly be such if their unemployed hours are filled by repining thoughts and melancholy musings; but if the intervals of forced inaction which are allotted to them be filled, as it was doubtless intended that they should be by Him Who appointed that particular trial for those His servants, with thoughts reaching beyond the passing and comparatively trivial things of this life; then none are so worthy of our envy, at least of our emulation, as these placid sufferers; nor can we refuse to acknowledge that their lot comprises a treasure of joy, yea, a mine of pure and refined enjoyment far exceeding in weight and intrinsic value the more showy and external advantages of the outwardly happy in this world. Doubtless this is a truth hard to be realized by those *who have not themselves experienced it, and*

which of us has done so fully? But let us not deny it on that account, let us rather watch and see whether the lot of all does not comprise some of those intervals which may be, according as we use them or not, either very trying and wearisome, or else the preparation for the eternal bliss of heaven. A long journey is usually thought a tedious expenditure of time and strength, and so it is indeed if the accidents of it occupy all our time and attention, but if we turn this respite from our ordinary occupations and pursuits into profitable reflections upon many subjects past, present, and to come, it may prove more fruitful afterwards in many ways than the busiest of our usually busy hours! All depends on first discerning and then making the right use of what comes uppermost on the wheel of time. Can we but attain to this, our whole life assumes a different aspect, for in fact the events of life are mostly what they appear to us, and what we feel them to be. The same person who has been wont to think his lot a very crooked one, or who has dwelt too much upon its trials, may, by the illuminating grace of God, come to take so different a view of his position that his lot may even appear to him to stand out from that of other men, arrayed in a light so soft and colours so grateful to his eye that he will even

esteem himself the most highly favoured among men, and it will seem to him well-nigh incredible that he could ever have harboured such ungrateful and ungracious thoughts towards Him “Who tempers to all the east wind in the day of His rough wind,” and Who has appointed the law of compensation to rule in this lower world of His until the “redemption of the purchased possession,”¹ the “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST, Whom having not seen ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”² To which may we all attain by the grace and mercy of Him Who liveth and reigneth with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, world without end. Amen.

¹ *Ephes. i. 14.*

² *1 S. Pet. i. 4-9.*

“The Vacant Seats.”

“**THERE**, (at God’s right hand,) is our home; there, if by God’s grace we persevere, above the stars, are the vacant seats prepared for us.”—*Dr. Pusey’s Sermon for Ascension Day.*

The Vacant Seats! How much in those few words, “the vacant seats.” Does it not speak and go home to every heart? Is there need to enlarge upon it, except for the happiness it affords in dwelling on it. We all know how much force there is in the idea of the vacant place allotted to any one on earth; whether it be the stall in the cathedral, or a place at the festal or social board; one’s own place at home, at the board, or round the family hearth. The special seat of any one member of the circle, the chair always occupied by the head of the family—the venerable parent! one’s own particular seat and place in the room, associated with oneself in the minds of the other members of our family—always left for one. What a difference it makes! And to think of there being such a place actually awaiting us in Paradise, in heaven, left empty until we come to fill it. It is truly a thought full of ecstasy if we can indeed realize it. There is a very opposite thought to this, but which may help us

to realize the other, through the very force of contrast. We know how in a churchyard or cemetery, many a place lies vacant awaiting its destined occupier, and how it will remain empty and untenanted till that destined possessor come to fill it. We know not where it is, but only that such a place there is on earth for us, for each one of us; and one day, we know not when, we shall go and fill it. But what a difference. We may, (that is, the poor earthly remains of our mortal body,) may remain there always, undisturbed; we can feel no assurance that it will be so. But as to the place prepared for our better part in Paradise and that more blessed mansion in our FATHER's house which is preparing for body and soul together, that if once attained, will be ours for ever. No fear to be displaced any more; of that we are certain. Where our faith comes short, is as to such a place being really ours, ours now, vacant and awaiting us to fill it. Let us dwell on and cherish this thought; it will be our best and most powerful incitement to those efforts on our part, which are demanded of us, to entitle us to attain what is so freely given, promised, and prepared for us.

A Meditation for Easter Eve.

LET us inquire into the reason of that fear and unwillingness to die, so common to man, whereas S. Paul so earnestly desired to "depart and to be with CHRIST, which is far better,"¹ that is to say, better than any joys which this world can afford. We have not far to seek the cause. "The sting of death is sin."² Sin alone has made death appear to us, the king of terrors. Sinful man shrinks from the thought of being ushered into the Presence of an Infinitely Perfect Being, Who is the arbiter of his fate. This is a humbling truth; let us acknowledge it. But is there no remedy for the evil? no hope to emerge from those shadows of dread and misgiving? Yes, indeed; for what avail the promises of the Gospel, if they stand us not in stead in the time of our greatest need, when our hearts would else fail us utterly? but, "thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through JESUS CHRIST."³ "There is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"⁴ Shall God that justifieth! Who is he that condemneth? Shall

¹ Phil. i. 23.

² 1 Cor. xv. 56.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 57.

⁴ Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34.

“CHRIST that died ; yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us?” Shall His Blood have been shed in vain ? Shall He have suffered so much for us in vain ? Doubtless of ourselves we were without hope, but shall we forget the redemption wrought for us, for whom “while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died.”¹ Who when we sin, still acts as our “Advocate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the righteous : and He is the propitiation for our sins, (viz., those of weak and imperfect Christians,) and for the sins of the whole world.”² To quote Scripture, however, in order to establish, or bring before our minds the consoling blessed doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, were to repeat the greater portion of the New, and much even of the Old Testament. Let this suffice to diminish those natural and clinging fears of death, which otherwise would keep us in bondage, until love has cast out fear, and faith has led us to rely on God, even more than we distrust ourselves. Hope having thus done its purifying work, we feel ourselves not quite unmeet for His Presence and His kingdom, so that we rather wait patiently for the appointed time of our great change, than shrink from it with overwhelming fear. Thus has it been with

¹ Rom. v. 8.

² 1 S. John ii. 1, 2.

many a faithful, though imperfect, Christian. Blessed be God ; we have ourselves witnessed it to be so, and the exclamation of our hearts then was : " O death, where is here thy sting ? O grave, where is here thy victory ?" ¹ Surely to such as these it was given, to bruise the head of Satan, even whilst by means of bodily anguish, he had power to bruise their heel.

On Easter Day.

IT is worthy of remark that S. Peter began very early (viz. on this very day) to fulfil the injunction laid on him by his Divine Master, that when he was converted he should strengthen his brethren ; ² for it would really seem as if it was his testimony borne to the other disciples of JESUS having appeared to him, which first of all raised their drooping spirits, and emboldened them to believe what they had been previously so slow to apprehend. When the two disciples returned from Emmaus to Jerusalem and gave the joyful tidings of the intercourse they had been privileged to hold in the way with their beloved Master, they were met by this corroborating assertion on the part of

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 55.

² S. Luke xxiii. 32.

their hearers, "The **LORD** is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."¹ It does not therefore seem unreasonable to connect the sudden growth of their faith since the morning (when they gave no credence to the joyful and astounding intelligence of S. Mary Magdalene and the other women) to this circumstance of the apparition of our **LORD** to S. Peter as communicated doubtless by himself. It is true that their dawning faith in so great a miracle hardly stood the personal test to which it was put immediately afterwards, when JESUS Himself stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you;"² for we read that they were "terrified and affrighted," notwithstanding the gracious salutation which "He Who knew what was in man"³ had just used to them, in order to subdue their fear. Even when after the sensible proofs He vouchsafed them of His real tangible presence, "they yet believed not for joy,"⁴ He added a still more amazing proof of His actual bodily resuscitation by eating before them, thus furnishing us with another example of His exceeding gentleness and forbearing love towards His Apostles and His followers throughout all generations to come.

¹ S. Luke xxiv. 34.

² Ver. 36.

³ S. John ii. 25.

⁴ S. Luke xxii. 41.

Easter Day.

ON Easter Eve we spoke of the necessity of faith and hope in the redemption wrought for us by the Passion and Death of our Divine Redeemer. On this happy day we are led to base our trust on the glorious doctrine of the Resurrection. It has been truly observed, that this is the firmest base of all our hopes for the future. S. Peter tells us, that "we have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead,"¹ because by the rising again of CHRIST God hath set His seal to the Divinity of our Blessed Redeemer, and to all that He has wrought on earth for us by word and deed, by His suffering and death on the Cross. Thus is our hope in Him confirmed, which without the fact of His Resurrection would have lacked all these encouragements. How important, therefore, and how full of consolation, is the event celebrated on this joyful day throughout the whole world, since on it are built all our hopes of a future life which form our support in passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

¹ 1 S. Pet. i. 3.



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